Practical Discourses

ON THE

Nature, Properties, and Excellencies

OF

CHARITY,

Above All

The GIFTS and GRACES of the

HOLY SPIRIT,

As They are Described in the 13*th* Chapter of the First Epistle of St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians.*

To which is Prefix'd,

A Visitation Sermon,

By way of INTRODUCTION to them,

With

An APPENDIX subjoin'd, containing some farther Discourses, suitable to the Subject, and necessary for the Present Times.

By *MATTHEW HOLE*, D. D. Rector of *Exeter* College, Prebendary of *Wells*, and Vicar of *Stokegursey* in *Somersetshire.*

And above all things have fervent Charity *among your selves: For* Charity *shall cover a Multitude of Sins.* 1 Pet. 4. 8.

OXFORD:

Printed by *L. Lichfield* for the AUTHOR. 1725.

Imprimatur,

JO. MATHER,

Dec. 15.
1724.

Vice-Canc. Oxon.



TO

The Right Reverend

FATHER in GOD,

STEPHEN,

Lord Bishop of

EXETER.

My Lord!

THIS comes to Welcome Your Lordship to Your Beloved Diocess; And to congratulate the Clergy and all other Members of it, in so Worthy a Diocesan. And, because Your Pious Predecessor Walter Stapledon, *the good Founder of* Exeter-College *in* Oxford, *hath transmitted to*

Your Lordſhip's Care and Inſpection, that ancient Nurſery of Learning and Religion; we eſteem our ſelves Happy in ſo Juſt and Impartial a Viſitor.

Moreover, I cannot but rejoice in the Felicity of my native City of Exon, *in having ſo good a Biſhop to adorn her Palace, and preſerve her Priviledges. To all which I may add, that the Living I now enjoy being the Donation of a Celebrated Colledge, of which You were lately a very Worthy Member; it gives me no ſmall Satisfaction in having Your Lordſhip for One of my much Honoured and Learned Patrons.*

Theſe Conſiderations have emboldened me to Dedicate this ſmall Treatiſe of the Nature and Properties of Charity *to Your Lordſhip's Patronage and*

Pro-

Protection, being (as Fame loudly proclaims) not only an Encourager, but a ſhining Example of the Virtue deſcribed and recommended in It.

The Subject is indeed truly Great and Noble, far exceeding all the Arts of Oratory, and the higheſt Flights of human Eloquence ſufficiently to ſet It forth. And therefore, if this imperfect Eſſay falls much ſhort (as it needs muſt) of the tranſcendent Worth and Excellency of this Subject, I cannot doubt of a favourable Conſtruction and Acceptance from ſo knowing and candid a Judge.

That Your Lordſhip may live long to be a Pillar of the Church, and a Prop to Your Country; And that all your Endeavours in each kind, may meet with

the

the desired Success here in this World, and crown You with endless Bliss and Glory in the World to come, is the hearty Wish and Prayer of

(My LORD)

Your LORDSHIP's

Most Obedient, and

Most humbly Devoted Servant,

MATTHEW HOLE.

The CONTENTS.

THE Preface.
The Introduction, in a Diſcourſe on the 1 *Cor.* 12. laſt. Page 1.
The Excellency of *Charity* above the Gift of Tongues. p. 43.
Above the Gift of Prophecy. p. 57.
Above the Underſtanding of all Myſteries. p. 62.
And all Knowledge. p. 65.
Above the Gift of Miracles, or a Wonder-working Faith. p. 67.
Above the Gift of Alms-giving. p. 72.
And above Martyrdom it ſelf. p. 79.

The Properties of *Charity*.

1. Of Long-ſuffering, *It Suffers long.* p. 87.
2. Of Loving-Kindneſs, *Charity is Kind.* p. 102.
3. Its freedom from Envy, *It Envieth not.* p. 118.
4. Its freedom from Vain-glory, *It Vaunteth not it ſelf.* p. 134.
5. Its freedom from Pride, *It is not Puffed up.* p. 149.
6. From all unſeemly Behaviour, *It behaveth not it ſelf Unſeemly.* p. 165.
7. From Self-ſeeking, *It ſeeketh not its own.* p. 180.
8. From ſudden and exceſſive Anger, *Is not eaſily Provoked.* p. 194.
9. From Jealouſy and Suſpicion, *It thinketh no Evil.* p. 209.
10. From all Delight in Sin, *It rejoiceth not in Iniquity.* p. 225.
11. Charity *Rejoiceth in the Truth.* p. 240.
12. It *Beareth all things.* p. 254.
13. It *Believeth all things.* p. 270.
14. It

The CONTENTS.

14. It *Hopeth all things.* p. 283.
15. It *Endureth all things.* p. 296.
The Duration of *Charity*, *It never faileth.* p. 310.
The defectible and failing Nature of all things else, *Whether there be Propheſies they ſhall fail, whether there be Tongues they ſhall ceaſe*, &c. p. 318.
The Imperfection of our Knowledge here, where we Know but in part, and Propheſy in part. p. 326.
The Perfection of *Charity*, and thereby the Perſpicuity of our Knowledge in a future State. p. 335.
Charity preferr'd before Faith and Hope. p. 342.
And now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity, but the greateſt of theſe is Charity.

The APPENDIX *containing ſome farther Diſcourſes, Uſeful for the Preſent Times.*

The *Firſt* whereof relates to the great Duty of *Publick Prayer*, ſhewing that a Standing Liturgy, or Set preſcrib'd Forms of Prayer ſerve better to preſerve the Reverence and Harmony of divine Worſhip, than ſudden and extemporary Effuſions, from *Pſalm* 89. 7. p. 1.
The Second relates to the Vertue of *Moderation*, ſhewing the true Notion, and detecting the Abuſe and wrong Notion, of that excellent Grace, from *Phil.* 4. 5. p. 30.
The *Third* repreſents the great Danger of *Diviſions*; together with the unſpeakable Comfort and Benefits of *Unanimity*; from the 2 *Cor.* 13. 11. p. 80.
To all which is added, for the Encouragement of the Subſcribers,
A Diſcourſe of the True Reformation of *Manners*, or the Nature and Qualifications of *True Zeal*, from *Gal.* 4. 18.

The Whole amounting to 33 *Sheets.*

THE

THE PREFACE.

THE Subject of the enſuing Diſcourſes is the excellent Grace of Charity; *a Subject worthy of, and yet far above, the Tongue of Men or Angels fully to deſcribe: For 'tis a Ray of the Divinity, or the Image of God, ſtamp'd upon the Soul:* Which is thereby renew'd in Knowledge, Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs, after the Image of Him that created It.

It comprizes the Love of God, and our Neighbours, which our Saviour makes the ſumm of the Law and the Prophets. *And the Apoſtle ſtyles the Practice of it,* the fulfilling of the Law: *So that* Charity *is rather a Conſtellation of Graces, than one ſingle Grace, or an Epitomy of all Chriſtian Vertues that adorn and enrich the Soul.*

It hath different Names, partly, from the different Objects about which it is converſant, partly, from the different Acts, which it exerts; And partly likewiſe, from the different Meaſures and Degrees of thoſe Acts. As for the Objects, when it is placed on God, 'tis term'd Piety; on Men, Humanity; more

particularly as it refers to Superiors, 'tis Loyalty; To Inferiors, Humility; To Equals, Courteſy, or Affability; To the Poor, 'tis Bounty; To the Stranger, Hoſpitality; To the Neighbour, Friendſhip; To the Benefactor, Gratitude; To the Offender, Mercy; And to All, Goodneſs and Ingenuity.

As for the different Acts it exerts, when it governs the Paſſions, 'tis call'd Meekneſs; when it beſtoweth good Things, 'tis Kindneſs or Beneficence; when it endureth Evil, 'tis Patience; when it beareth with the Infirmities of Mankind, 'tis Candor or Forbearance; when it paſſeth by Wrongs, 'tis Long-ſuffering and Forgiveneſs; when it ſympathizeth and bears a part in other Men's Diſtreſſes, 'tis Pity and Compaſſion; when it contributes to their Neceſſities, 'tis Almsgiving; when it diſpenſeth Rewards and Puniſhments, 'tis Juſtice; with reſpect to our Words and Promiſes, 'tis Truth; to our Bargains and Contracts, Fidelity; And in all our Actions, 'tis Honeſty and fair Dealing.

Laſtly, For the ſeveral Meaſures and Degrees of theſe Acts; in the higher degrees, 'tis term'd Zeal; in the lower, Lenity; And in all, Sincerity, or Integrity.

Thus is Charity *a Compoſition of all Vertues, and ſo 'tis in Effect the ſame with what we call Religion, which binds to the ſtrict Obſervance*

ſervance and Performance of our reſpective Duties, both to God and to Man.

And as the Excellency of this Grace may be ſeen in the Extent and Comprehenſiveneſs, ſo may it much more in the Benefit and Uſefulneſs of it; for as the want of this Vertue is the great occaſion of all the Miſeries of human Life, ſo the Practice of it would bring unſpeakable Comfort and Advantage to Mankind: this would root out of Men's Minds all the black Paſſions of Envy, Hatred and Malice, and plant nothing but Love and Goodwill in their room; 'twould empty their Hearts of all evil Deſires and corrupt Deſigns, and fill them with nothing but the Praiſes of God, and Good wiſhes for our Neighbours, making all Men tender of the Perſons, Goods and Reputations of one another: In a word, this would make us ſtand affected to all Men, as we are to Our-ſelves, or thoſe whom we dearly love, and to do to others only as we would be done by our-ſelves, *which would make the World a Seat of Peace and Love, and every Habitation a Manſion of Tranquility: where this Vertue reigns, every one ſits quietly under his own Vine, and comfortably reaps the fruits of his own Labour; there are no Cries of Oppreſſion or Injuſtice, no leading into Captivity, and no complaining in our Streets:* Happy are the People, that are in ſuch a

Caſe, *and the happier too, becauſe this is the way to* have the Lord for their God.

I am ſenſible how far the Diſcourſes fall ſhort of the Dignity of the Subject, and fear they may want ſome of that Charity which they deſcribe. But the Comfort is, if there be any Failings or Imperfections in the handling of it, The Subject it ſelf teaches to pardon and conceal them, for Charity covereth a Multitude of Faults, *and nothing is more oppoſite to it than Cenſure and Detraction.*

However, Such as they are, they are humbly tender'd to the Candid Reader, *hoping He will over-look the Meaneſs, and accept the Heartineſs of the Oblation.*

Farewel.

A Viſita-

A

Viſitation-Sermon,

Serving as an

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Following Diſcourſes

OF

CHARITY.

1 COR. XII. Laſt Verſe.

But covet earneſtly the beſt gifts: And yet ſhew I unto you a more excellent way.

THE great Subject of this Chapter is concerning *Spiritual Gifts*, which the *Apoſtle* in his entrance upon it, declares to be ſo uſeful and neceſſary a piece of Knowledge, that he would by no means *have us ignorant of it.* And to the end that the Chriſtian Church might be rightly inſtructed in ſo Divine and Excellent a Ver. 1.

Subject, he here treats at large concerning the Author, the Number, the Uſe, and the Diſtribution of theſe Spiritual Gifts.

For the Author, he declares it to be no Other than the Holy Spirit of God, the Third Perſon in the ever Bleſſed and Adorable Trinity, whoſe peculiar Office in the Oeconomy of Man's Salvation, is to edify and inſtruct the Church of Chriſt, for which we are ſo entirely beholding to this Holy Spirit, that *no Man* Ver. 3. *can ſay, that Jeſus Chriſt is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt.* And they are called therefore *Spiritual Gifts*, not becauſe they are ſeated in the Spiritual Part or Soul of Man, but becauſe they proceed from the Holy Spirit of God.

From the Author, he goes on to the number and variety of theſe Spiritual Gifts, reckoning up in the 4*th* and following Verſes, *The Word of Wiſdom, the Word of Knowledge, the Gift of Prophecy, the Gift of Healing, the Gift of Tongues, and the Interpretation of Tongues*, and the like: All which diverſity of Gifts he tells us *flow from the ſame Spirit, and their different operations from the ſame Lord, who worketh all in all*; that is, who worketh all theſe Gifts in all that have them.

And

And leaſt we ſhould miſtake the deſign of the Holy Ghoſt in beſtowing theſe Gifts, he proceeds to direct us in the right end and uſe of them, telling us, *That the manifeſtation of the Spirit was given to every one to profit withal*; that is, not barely to procure ſome private profit to themſelves, but for the publick good and benefit of others: They were not given for Vanity and Oſtentation, to ſet forth ourſelves by our Eloquence, or any Elaborate Arts of Speech, much leſs to raiſe Schiſms and Factions, but to advance the Peace, Unity and Edification of the Church. Ver. 7.

Then laſtly, for the diſtribution of theſe Gifts, he tells us, that they are not all given to one, nor are the ſame given to all, but they are ſcattered with an admirable variety and in different meaſures on the Sons of Men, that, like the various Members of the natural Body, they might be all helpful and ſerviceable to one another; *Are all Apoſtles*, ſaith he? *are all Prophets? are all Teachers? do all ſpeak with Tongues? do all Interpret?* No, *He hath given ſome to be Apoſtles, ſome Prophets, ſome Evangeliſts, ſome Paſtors, and ſome Teachers*; and all this *for the perfecting of the Saints for the work of the miniſtry,* Ver. 28, 29, 30. Eph 4. 11, 12.

and the edifying of the body of Christ.

And having thus discoursed at large of the nature, end, and use of these Spiritual Gifts, he closes the Chapter with this excellent advice of our Text, *Covet earnestly the best gifts*: And for an introduction to the following Chapter, adds, *And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.*

The words will require a little Explication, before I can sum up the Sense, or speak clearly to them.

First, Then by *gifts* here, there can be no doubt but the Apostle chiefly intended those supernatural and extraordinary Gifts of Tongues, Miracles, Prophecy, and the like, which were rife and common in those Days; and were indeed necessary in the Infancy of the Church, for the confirmation of the Gospel, and to gain Proselytes to the belief of it: But those extraordinary and miraculous Gifts having long since ceased, together with the reason of them, may not now be the object of our Ambition; and therefore the Apostle's advice here may be, and usually is, extended likewise to the natural and acquired Gifts of the Spirit, which are necessary still to propagate the Doctrine of the Gospel, as it now stands confirmed and derived down to us:

Of

Of this kind are those intellectual Habits and Endowments of the Mind, by the improvement whereof some attain to a greater skill in the Tongues, others excel in the knowledge of Arts and Sciences, by which means Men come to have different Talents, and are diversly qualified for publick Service: All which Gifts, together with the Improvement of them, proceed still from the same Spirit, and are given for the same use, even the good and benefit of Mankind; and these will be continued to the end of the World only with this difference, that whereas the former were conferred on the Apostles, and others, by Inspiration and sudden Infusion, and so they needed only to be directed to the right use of them; these latter are now conveyed to us by the ordinary Methods of Study and Diligence, and so we ought to be taught, both how to get, and how to use them as we ought. These are the *gifts*. But,

Secondly, What does the Apostle mean by the *best gifts*? For that term denotes not only a diversity, but a preference of some above others. In Answer to which, by the *best gifts* here, we are to understand not absolutely the best in every kind, but those that were most useful, and tended most

moſt to the edification of the Church; for the Apoſtle having before aſſerted,

Ver. 7. *That the manifeſtation of the Spirit was given to every one to profit withal*: Whatever moſt promoted that end was reckoned in the number of the *beſt gifts*; ſo that whether the Apoſtle referr'd here to the gift of Tongues, which was neceſſary at that time, when the Goſpel was to be Preached to People of divers Nations and Languages, or whether he had an eye to the gift of Miracles, which gave the greateſt credit to their Doctrine, and begat the higheſt aſſent and veneration to it; or whatever elſe were the particular Gifts referr'd to, 'tis plain the Apoſtle meant by them, ſuch as beſt edified the Church; and conſequently by Analogy, we are ſtill to reckon thoſe the *beſt gifts* whereby we may beſt profit and edifie our Hearers. But,

Thirdly, What is the Apoſtle's meaning in bidding us to covet theſe Gifts, and that earneſtly too? To covet in Scripture is ſometimes taken in a very bad ſenſe, and there is one whole Precept in the Decalogue directly levell'd againſt it. Indeed to covet any of our Neighbours Goods, or to uſe any indirect arts to compaſs them, is a vile and deteſtable

piece

piece of Covetouſneſs, but to deſire the gifts of God for the good of Mankind, and to ſeek to enrich our Minds with the higheſt and beſt abilities to promote his Glory, is a noble and laudable Ambition; and this is what the Apoſtle here recommends to us. But,

Fourthly, What is That more excellent way which he here directs to? *And yet ſhew I unto you a more excellent Way.* The words in the Original are, Καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν ὑμῖν δείκνυμι. *I ſhew unto you a way to attain to a greater excellency than any the beſt gifts can advance you to.* And what's that? Why 'tis the Graces of the Spirit, as appears by what follows, where the Apoſtle immediately falls upon the excellent Grace of Charity, which as it comprizes the Love of God and our Neighbour, is the complex or ſummary of all Chriſtian Graces; and to ſet forth its excellence, he prefers it far above all other Gifts or Endowments whatever; as we ſhall ſhew hereafter.

From the words thus explained, we may eaſily gather theſe two Propoſitions.

I. That the Miniſters and Paſtors of the Church ought earneſtly to covet and labour for the *beſt gifts*; that is, thoſe eſpecially that tend moſt to the Benefit

Benefit and Edification of the Church.

II. That the Graces of the Spirit are more excellent than the Gifts of it, and therefore ought to be more earneſtly coveted and laboured for.

Theſe two uſeful and ſeaſonable Truths ſhall be the Subject of our enſuing Diſcourſe; and I begin with the firſt of them, *viz.*

That the Miniſters and Paſtors of the Church ought earneſtly to covet and labour for the *beſt gifts*; that is, ſuch eſpecially as conduce moſt to the Benefit and Edification of their Hearers. St. *Paul* gave this direction with reference to thoſe extraordinary Gifts that were rife in his time, that they ſhould covet and ſeek after the beſt of them. And the Reaſon being ſtill the ſame, we are concerned likewiſe, even in thoſe ordinary Gifts that are continued to us, to deſire thoſe moſt that are likelieſt to do moſt good. In treating therefore of this Propoſition, I muſt enquire,

Firſt, What are now the beſt and moſt beneficial Gifts for the uſe of the Church? And,

Secondly, How we are to covet and ſeek after them.

For

For the *First*, Before I can ſhew you what are now the moſt uſeful and beneficial Gifts for the good of the Church, I muſt put you in mind of Four or Five Gifts or Talents in Prayer or Preaching, which are none of the beſt, tho' they have been too much affected in our days. And the

1. I ſhall mention of theſe, is, The Gift of Extemporary Effuſions in Prayer, which ſome have miſcalled, *The gift of Prayer*. This is not much to be affected, nor to be reckon'd in the number of the *beſt gifts*; for This inſtead of edifying hath greatly diſturbed the Peace of the Church, and deſtroyed the Reverence and Harmony of publick Worſhip. *Solomon*, who hath been juſtly reputed the Wiſeſt of Men, hath will'd us, *Not to be raſh with our Mouth, nor haſty to utter any thing before God, but to conſider that God is in Heaven, and we are upon Earth, therefore our Words unto him ſhould be few.* Eccl. 5. 2. Meaning that we ſhould never approach the Divine Majeſty, but with the profoundeſt Awe and Reverence; and that is beſt ſignified by few and well weigh'd Expreſſions in our Addreſſes to him: And therefore a greater than *Solomon*, even our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf, the Head

and

and Founder of his Church, preſcribed a Form of Prayer to be uſed by his Diſciples and Followers; and the Chriſtian Church according to his Order, hath uſed the ſame ever ſince, and likewiſe compos'd her Publick Liturgies according to that excellent Platform: And Thanks be to God, our Church hath at this day one of the moſt pious and beſt compos'd Liturgies that is extant in the Chriſtian World; ſo that now we need only bring ardent deſires and good affections in the uſe of it, and we need not doubt a gracious anſwer and acceptance. There was indeed in the days of the Apoſtles an extraordinary gift of Praying by Inſpiration, called ſometimes, *Praying by the Spirit*, which was neceſſary in the beginning of Chriſtianity: when as the Apoſtle tells us, *They knew not how or what to pray for as they ought:* but when the Holy Spirit of God had dictated the holy Scriptures, wherein we are directed both as to the matter and manner of our Prayers; when the ſacred Canon was compleated and Publick Prayers compos'd according to the directions of it, then this amongſt other extraordinary Gifts ceaſed together with the reaſon of it; for the Spirit of God which doth nothing in vain,

is

is not wont to give extraordinary assistances when ordinary means will serve the turn.

So that all the gift of Prayer now remaining in the Church, consists not in pouring out many and new words, but in the pious Motions, and good Affections of the Heart: *The Spirit helps our infirmities still*; but how? Not by furnishing us with new Phrases and variety of Expressions, which God is no way delighted with, *but with sighs and groans*, saith the Apostle, *that cannot be uttered*; that is, by exciting the inward desires and breathings of the Soul after him: Hence we read that the poor *Publican*'s short Litany, *Lord be merciful to me a Sinner*, prevail'd more for his Justification than the tedious Harangues of the *Pharisee*; which Sect, tho' in outward pretence and appearance the strictest in those times, our Saviour blames for their Babling and vain Repetitions in Prayer, as if they thought to be heard for their much speaking: And 'tis well known, what crude and indigested, not to say, blasphemous, Speeches have drop'd from the Mouths of such bold pretenders to inspir'd Prayers. The truth is, this Extemporary way of Praying was a thing unknown

Rom. 8. 26.

Luk. 18. 10, 11. 14.

unknown in the Primitive and purer Ages of the Church, and hath plainly appeared to be a late Invention, brought into these Kingdoms by the subtlety of Popish Emissaries, meerly to distract and divide the People; and we know how they triumph in the Schisms and Confusions that have been raised by it: which is enough to put us out of conceit with this Gift, and the Pretenders to it.

2. The Affectation of Tone, or the vehemence of Voice or Gesture in Prayer or Preaching, serve not the true ends of Edification, and therefore may be reckon'd rather among the Artifices of Seducers, than in the number of the *best gifts*; for Religion is a grave and serious thing, and makes its way into the Heart, rather by powerful Arguments than by a powerful Noise. We read in Scripture, 1 Kin. 19. 11, 12. that God was not in the Earthquake, nor in the Tempest, but in the small and *still Voice*: And the efficacy of God's Word is better convey'd by calm and sound Reasonings, than by the loudest blusters of Action or Utterance: Such Bodily exercise profiteth little, and is better suited to the Levity of the Stage, than to the Gravity of the Pulpit. Affected Tones and Gestures may indeed raise

raiſe the Fancy, and over-heat the Imagination, but ſeldom or never leave any true or laſting warmth upon the Heart or the Affections; they may ſerve to aſtoniſh and ſtartle weak People for the preſent, but the impreſſion quickly wears off, and paſſeth away with the motion or ſound that raiſed it. And therefore 'tis obſerved of thoſe that uſe or follow thoſe Arts, that tho' they may ſeem affected for a while, yet they never prove either the wiſer, or the better Men. Length and Loudneſs were the main Ingredients of the *Phariſees* Prayers; for which we find our Saviour often condemning their Hypocriſie, but never commending their Devotion. All that have had any game to play upon the People, have betook themſelves to ſuch Wiles, and by this Craft have got their Wealth, and made Merchandize of them.

But as it hath been the Honour of the Regular Clergy, not to affect ſuch Mean Arts, ſo 'twill be the Wiſdom of the Laity to beware of being deluded by thoſe that uſe them.

3. The gift of divers Tongues, or the oſtentation of ſeveral Languages in Popular Sermons, is of little or no uſe, and therefore not to be affected by us: For

the Vulgar are little edified by *Latin*; and 'tis Proverbial among them to ſay, of what They underſtand not, *That 'tis Greek to them*: So that the uſe of theſe Tongues in our Diſcourſes to them can be of no advantage; they may ſerve to amuſe and confound them, but cannot any ways inform or help their Underſtandings: 'Tis true indeed, the ſtudy and knowledge of the Tongues are neceſſary to qualifie and accompliſh a Divine, ſeeing the Holy *Scriptures*, and many great and uſeful parts of Learning are written in thoſe Languages: But of what uſe the embelliſhing or interlarding our Diſcourſes with them to the Common People ſhould be, is not eaſie
1 Cor. 14. to underſtand. The Apoſtle blames Praying and Prophecying in a Tongue not known to the People: And ſo far as we intermix theſe things, we ſpeak unto them in an unknown Tongue.

To this may be added the uſing of Hard Words, and Terms of Art, that are above the reach of Vulgar Underſtandings, ſpeaking as the Apoſtle expreſſes it,
2 Pet. 2. 18. *great ſwelling words of Vanity*, and affecting
1 Tim. 6. 20. Science falſly ſo called.

As alſo the Clouding our Diſcourſes with Myſtical Phraſes and Uncouth Expreſſions;

Expreſſions; ſuch as the Incomings and Outlettings, the Beamings and Streamings of the Spirit, with ſuch like unintelligible Jargon; whereby ſome Men inſtead of making difficult things plain, have made plain things difficult, which is a very fruitleſs and unprofitable Talent.

4. The Oſtentation of Wit, or Curioſity of Language in our Publick Diſcourſes, tend little or nothing to Edification, and therefore may not be reckoned among the *beſt gifts*. Witty Sayings and fine Sentences may indeed tickle the Ears, but never ſink into the Heart; they may pleaſe a while, and afford matter of Talk, but they ſeldom or never profit the Hearers. St. *Paul*, That great Converter of Souls, declares that his *Preaching conſiſted not in the Wiſdom of words, but in the demonſtration of the Spirit*. He ſtudied not the fineneſs of Expreſſion, but ſoundneſs of Doctrine: And we read that the ſimplicity of the Goſpel prevailed more, than a vain oſtentation of Wit could ever do, and *the fooliſhneſs of preaching triumph'd over all the wiſdom of the wiſe*. Our Buſineſs (my Brethren!) is not to gratifie itching Ears, but to ſave Mens Souls; and that is better done by grave, ſolid and practical Diſ-

1 Cor. 2. 4.

1 Cor. 1. 21.

Diſcourſes, than by the moſt florid and polite Preachments, which may delight for the preſent, but bring no laſting Benefit or Inſtruction with them; For as the plaineſt Food nouriſhes more than the moſt delicious Kickſhaws, ſo plain Truths without Art or Varniſh, oft-times leave deeper Impreſſions on the Mind, than all the Charms of Humane Eloquence.

Laſtly, The Art of ſtraining the words of Scripture, and forcing them from their plain and genuine ſenſe, is none of the *beſt Gifts*: This is done ſometimes by Criticks, who to advance a new Notion will ſtretch and pervert the Holy Scripture, and by the help of Invention, and the ambiguity of Words and Particles offer violence to a Text, and even take it by force. Our Bleſſed Saviour rebuk'd the *Phariſees* for their falſe Gloſſes, by which they made void the Law of God: And theſe Men juſtly incur the ſame Cenſure, who by their wild and ſtrain'd Interpretations make the Goſpel of Chriſt of none effect.

Mat. 5.

There are others, who to ſerve the Intereſt of a Party, will rack and torture the Scriptures, to make them ſpeak what they pleaſe; Hence ſome have uſed the

Bible

Bible as the moſt ſucceſsful Engine to overturn Church and State, and have made the Goſpel of Peace, the Trumpet of War and Sedition. This is a moſt pernicious Talent, and hath done unſpeakable miſchief. St. *Peter* tells us of ſome, who wreſt the Scriptures to their own Damnation: And we have heard of others, who have wreſted them to the ruine and ſubverſion of Kingdoms, and have ſo far rack'd ſome Paſſages of Sacred Writ, as even to force them to ſpeak Blood and Confuſion. 2 Pet. 3. 16.

But our Apoſtle does not here will us to covet, but to abhor ſuch vile and deteſtable Arts.

And thus having mentioned ſome of thoſe Gifts, which though too much in vogue, are yet none of the beſt, I proceed now to thoſe more uſeful Talents and Abilities, that tend moſt to the Edification of the Church, and therefore ought to be coveted by us as the *beſt gifts.*

To which end, we muſt note, that the two great parts of Edification, are Knowledge and Practice.

The former gives Men the right underſtanding of Holy Myſteries; And the latter teaches them to ſquare their

Lives and Actions according to them. And consequently the *best gifts* are Those that enable us,

First, To settle and inform Mens Judgments aright in the Knowledg of the Truth. And,

Secondly, To excite their Affections to the Love and Practice of it.

First, I say, We are to covet those as the *best gifts* that enable us to inform and settle Mens Judgments aright, in the knowledg of the Truth. Here we must begin; for if we go about to move and stir the Affections, before the Mind be well informed, we shall beget a Heat without Light, or a Zeal without Knowledge, which will be of very evil and dangerous Consequence. Our Apostle tells us, *That 'tis good to be zealously affected*; but then he limits it, *allways to a good thing*: And therefore the Mind must be well instructed in the goodness of the thing, before we excite to the love or pursuit of it, otherwise Zeal may spend it self, as it too often does, upon very bad matters: And this is the root and foundation of all Fanaticism: For some Teachers seek to work upon and warm

Gal. 4. 18.

the

the Paſſions of Men, before their Judgments are well informed, and thereby make their Hearers zealous for or againſt things, without giving them the right underſtanding of either; and this hath begot thoſe intemperate heats in Religion, which have frequently broke out to the diſturbance of Church and State.

The Affections which are too apt to inflame, are very unfit to guide, and therefore they muſt not out-run, but follow the Underſtanding, and be guided by the dictates of a well-informed Judgment; for elſe how eaſily may the undue fervours of the Mind lead to the heats of Enthuſiaſm, or the weakneſſes of Superſtition? And how frequently have they that have been too haſty and eager in raiſing the Affections, made ſad work with the Paſſions of Men.

By this means, ſome have been *ever learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth*, being unſtable in their Principles, and like *children toſſed to and fro with every wind of doctrine; by the cunning craftineſs of thoſe that lay in wait to deceive.* 2. Tim. 3. 7. Eph. 4. 14.

To edifie then, or profit our Hearers, we muſt begin with their Judgments, and endeavour to ſettle them aright in

the great Points of Religion: For as in the Creation of the World, the firſt thing created was Light, and that diſpelled the Darkneſs of the rude and unformed Chaos; even ſo in the new Creation, the firſt thing muſt be to let in a clear and convincing light upon the Soul, and That will ſcatter all the Miſts of Error and Ignorance.

To this end Catechizing will be of very great uſe, to inſtruct Children betimes in the Principles of Religion, to inſtill into them the Knowledge of God, and to ſeaſon their tender Years with an Early Piety: By thus *training up children betimes in the way that they ſhould go*, *Solomon* hath told us, *that when they are old, they will not depart from it.*

Pro. 22. 6.

As they grow up, we muſt explain to them the Nature and Obligation of their Baptiſmal Vow, giving them to underſtand what they have promiſed, and how they may be enabled to perform it. When they come to greater Maturity, we are to let them know upon what grounds the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith ſtands, that they may not be ſhaken from the belief of them: And this will be beſt done by a plain and eaſie Expoſition of the Apoſtles Creed.

After

After this, we are to ſhew them the excellency and extent of the Divine Law by a fuller Explication of the *Decalogue*, or Ten Commandments, deſcribing the Nature of every particular Vertue and Vice, required and forbidden in them: So ſhall we open their Eyes to ſee the wonderous things of God's Law; we ſhall lead them as it were by the hand into the paths of Righteouſneſs, and guide their feet into the ways of Truth and Peace. And having thus fixed and ſettled their Judgments in the knowledge of Divine Truths, we are then to apply our ſelves to the Pſ. 1. 18, 19.

Second part of Edification; and to covet thoſe Gifts that may beſt ſerve to move their Affections, and to ſtir them up to the love and practice of their Duty. And here we may ſafely uſe all the Arts of Divine Rhetorick, and betake our ſelves to the moſt prevailing Topicks, and Methods of Perſwaſion; Here we may deſcribe the lovelineſs and rewards of Vertue, ſetting forth in the moſt lively colours the Beauty of Holineſs, that Men may be enamour'd and fall in love with it: Here we may repreſent the uglineſs and deformity of Vice, painting it in the blackeſt and moſt odious ſhape, to beget

the

the greater abhorrence and deteſtation of it. When we would reveal the Wrath of God from Heaven againſt Sinners, we may appear as on Mount *Sinai*, in Thun-
Exod. 19. der and Lightning, to make (if poſſible) the ſturdieſt Sinners to quake and tremble. When we would diſplay the Riches of Divine Grace in the Work of Man's Redemption, we may like our Saviour on
Mat. 5. the Mount of *Olives*, breathe out nothing but Joy and Bleſſedneſs, and with open voice proclaim the glad tydings of the Kingdom of Heaven. Knowing the Terrors of the Lord, we are to perſwade
2 Cor. 5. 11. Men to *flee from the wrath to come.* And knowing the tender Love of God to Mankind, we are to court them to accept of
Ver. 20. Mercy and Pardon, and as Ambaſſadors in Chriſt's ſtead, beſeech them to be reconcil'd. This will make our Doctrine drop as the Rain, and our Speech diſtill as the Dew; gently ſliding through the Ears into *the Hearts* of our Hearers, and by a ſweet Facility inſinuating it ſelf into
Rom. 10. 15. their Will and Affections: And then *how beautiful will be the feet of them that thus preach the Goſpel of Peace, and bring glad tydings of good things?*

And thus having ſhewed what are the *beſt gifts*, and moſt worthy of our ambition; I proceed, *Se-*

Secondly, To ſhew how we are to covet them; which our Text tells us, muſt be earneſtly: *Covet earneſtly the beſt gifts.* Now to covet any thing in good earneſt, is not barely to approve of it, nor yet much leſs to ſit down with faint and languiſhing wiſhes after it, but to apply our ſelves to the moſt proper means of attaining it, and to exert the utmoſt of our Powers and Faculties in endeavours after it: And therefore when the Apoſtle adviſeth us to *covet earneſtly the beſt gifts*, he thereby puts us upon uſing the beſt means of becoming Maſters of them. And becauſe it may be asked what they are? I ſhall briefly mind you of theſe Four:

1. Diligent Study. 2. Frequent Exerciſe. 3. Hearty Prayer. And 4. A good Life. Of each of which a word or two diſtinctly. And,

1. We muſt covet theſe Gifts by our diligent Study and earneſt Search after them; for this is now the ordinary way and means of acquiring them. Indeed in the Days of the Apoſtles, the Spirit was poured out, and came upon them, not by Study, but by ſudden Infuſion. The mighty Wind, in which the Holy Spirit deſcended, was a Symbol of Inſpira-

ſpiration, and betoken'd the breathing into them the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt: The Fire that ſate upon their Heads, repreſented that fervency of Spirit, which enabled them with Courage to go thorough all the Difficulties of their Office: The Cloven-Tongues beſpake the diverſity of Languages, with which they were endow'd; by which means Illiterate Perſons excelled the greateſt Rabbies, and Fiſhermen ſpake more Languages than the moſt ſtudied Linguiſts. But now we are to ſeek *That* by Induſtry, which they had by Inſpiration; and the Church being arrived at the Stature of a Man in Chriſt Jeſus, God Almighty hath laid aſide thoſe extraordinary helps and ſupports of Infancy: So that Diligence now keeps the Key of Knowledge, and 'tis Study alone that opens to us the Treaſures of Wiſdom; *Study*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *to* 2 Tim. 2. 15. *ſhew thy ſelf a workman, that needeth not to be aſhamed.* To be an Able Divine is a work of ſtudy; and a ſerious intention of Mind is neceſſary to the expert and faithful diſcharge of our Office: We may not now pretend to, or look for Inſpiration, nor hope by Dreams and Viſions to know the Will of God: No,

Ignorance

Ignorance and Folly are the effects of Sloth, whilst Learning and Knowledge are only the Reward of Industry; *The word is nigh thee*, saith the Apostle, *even in thy Mouth, and in thy Hand*, oh! let it be in thy Heart too, and make it the daily object of thy Study and Meditation: *We have a sure word of prophesie*, saith St. *Peter*, *whereunto you do well to take heed, as to a light that shineth in a dark Place.* *Solomon*, that great Master of Wisdom, exhorts us to seek for Knowledge, and to search diligently for Understanding; yea, he wills us to *search for it as for Silver, and to dig for it as for hid Treasure*; for tho' there be some truths that seem to float at top, and to lye open to a careless eye, yet there are others that lye deep, and require a profounder search; here we are to imploy our most compos'd thoughts, giving our selves to Reading and Meditation, as the first and great means of attaining them.

Rom. 10. 8. 2 Pet. 1. 19. Pro. 2. 4. 1 Tim. 4. 13.

2. Our study for these Gifts must be accompanied with the frequent use and exercise of them: This will whet our Parts, and set an edge on our Faculties, and thereby enable us *rightly to divide the Word of Truth*. St. *Paul* exhorts *Timothy*, to *stir up the gift of God that was in*

2 Tim. 1. 16.

in him; signifying that 'tis Exercise that puts Life and Vigour into our Parts; that blows up those Sparks within us, and quickens them into a bright and useful Flame. Thus to imploy is to improve our Talent, which will daily increase by Exercise, and like the Widows Cruise of Oyl, multiply by being used. A lazy neglect of Mens gifts makes them do the work of the Lord negligently; and for want of a due exercise of their own Parts, they do but too much exercise the Patience of them that hear them. He that *buried his Talent in the Earth*, and *he that wrapped it in a Napkin*, were both deprived of them, and doom'd as *wicked and unprofitable servants to outer darkness*; whereas he that used his Talent to his Master's Honour, was commended for a good and faithful servant, and *enter'd into his Master's Joy*; which makes it evident, that Exercise is a good means of improving our Gifts, and procuring to us the Reward of them.

3. To the Exercise of our Gifts we must add hearty and fervent Prayer for a Blessing upon them; for tho' Paul *may*
1 Cor. 3. 7. *plant, and* Apollo *may water*, yet 'tis *God alone that gives the increase. If*
Jam. 1. 5. *any lack wisdom*, saith St. *James, let him*

ask

ask it of God. Thither our recourſe muſt be, if ever we hope to obtain it; and indeed whither elſe ſhould we go? *He only hath the words of eternal Life.* To ſeek for Wiſdom only in Books and Writings, is but to *ſeek the Living among the Dead*; 'tis the Bleſſing of God that enlivens our Endeavours, and makes us rich both in Grace and Knowledge; and he that leaves out this in his ſearch after them, will never arrive to more than what will betray his own Ignorance: *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights*: and therefore we muſt look upward, and make our requeſts known unto him, *in whom are hid all the treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge*; and for our encouragement, the ſame Apoſtle tells us, that he *giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not*: And our Bleſſed Saviour hath aſſured us, that Earthly Parents are not more willing to give good Gifts to their Children, *than our Heavenly Father is to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask it.* Our deſires then of theſe Gifts muſt be carried on with unceſſant Petitions to God for them, and if we would attain to any meaſure of them, we muſt ſeek them upon our Knees: for

Jo. 6. 68.

James 1. 17.

Col. 2. 3.

Jam. 1. 5.

Mat. 7. 11.

'tis

'tis the Bleſſing of God that gives the Talent, and the Improvement too; and the Fruits of the Spirit owe all their increaſe to the Dew of his Heavenly Benediction.

Laſtly, To our Prayers we muſt joyn the exerciſes of Vertue and a Holy Life; for Wiſdom enters not into a polluted Soul, nor can ſo refin'd a perfection inhabit an impure or corrupt Heart: *The carnal mind is enmity againſt God: It receives not the things of the ſpirit of God, neither can it know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* And therefore our Hearts muſt be purged from the corruptions of Sin and Error, to make way for the entrance of Divine Truths; and our Souls muſt be conſecrated to holy uſes, before they can be fit to be the *Temples of the Holy Ghoſt*: A good Life will beſt diſpoſe us to a good Underſtanding, and ſincere deſires of pleaſing God will make us uſeful and profitable unto Men. So that if we mean to arrive at any proficiency or growth in Knowledge, we muſt live up to that whereunto we have already attain'd; for *he that doth the will of my father*, ſaith our Saviour, *he ſhall know the doctrine, whether it be of God.* "Divinity (as one hath

Rom. 8. 7.
1 Cor. 2. 14.
Jo. 7. 17.

"well

"well obſerved on thoſe words) is a Sci-
"ence that we are not ſo much to Study,
"as to Live our ſelves into: It paſſes
into the Head through the Heart, and
our Knowledge will daily increaſe by the
Love and Practice of what we know;
for God Almighty delights to communi-
cate his Mind to ſuch as were willing to
do it: *The ſecret of the Lord*, ſaith the
Pſalmiſt, *is with them that fear him, and* Pſal. 25. 9. 14.
he will teach them his covenant: And elſe-
where, *The meek he will guide in judg-
ment, and the humble he will teach his way.*
He is ever ready to reward the leaſt de-
gree of Obedience to his Will, with far-
ther diſcoveries of it. And therefore the
ſame ingenious Author hath obſerved,
"That in old time the Men of extraor-
"dinary Revelations were Men of extra-
"ordinary Piety too; and ſuch had
"moſt of the ſecret Will of God impart-
"ed to them that beſt performed his re-
"vealed Will: They were the *Enochs*,
"the *Abrahams*, and the *Eliſahs*; and
"ſuch of whom the Scripture more re-
"markably teſtifies, that *they walked
"with God*. And ſurely he that walketh
"with another is likely to know more of
"his Mind than a ſtranger, or one that
"keeps at a diſtance from him. In ſhort,

Vertue is the moſt fruitful Principle of Knowledge, and he that doeth what he knows of the Will of God ſhall be ſure to know more of it; *for to him that hath ſhall be given*, ſaith our Saviour, *and he ſhall have abundantly.*

And thus I have done with the firſt part of our Text, having ſhew'd you what are the *beſt gifts*, and how we are to covet and ſeek after them.

But I muſt crave a little more of your Patience, whilſt I *ſhew unto you a more excellent way.* And this will bring me to the ſecond part of our Text contain'd in this Propoſition.

II. That the Graces of the Spirit excel the higheſt and the beſt Gifts of it. And here I could almoſt wiſh for the Tongue of an Angel, to deſcribe to you This *more excellent way*, and to perſwade you to walk in it. But St. *Paul*, who was rap't up into the third Heaven, hath prevented our wiſh, and extoll'd the ſingle Grace of *Charity* as high as words can reach, above all other Gifts and Endowments whatever; for in the next words to our Text, he thus delivers himſelf; Could *I ſpeak with the Tongue of Men and of Angels*, and had all the Charms

of

of Divine and Humane Eloquence; could I dart the brightest Beams of Light into Mens Understanding, and by the most powerful Rhetorick command and insinuate into their Affections, yet without *Charity*, *I am no better than sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal*: Had I the Gift of Prophecy, and understood the deepest Mysteries; had I the knowledg of all that is past since the beginning of Time, and could foretel things to come to the end of the World, yea, had I Faith strong enough to remove Mountains, and to make the Poles of the World to change their place, yet in all these accomplishments, without *Charity*, I am nothing, less than nothing, and Vanity. What could the Tongue of Men or of Angels speak higher in the praise of this Vertue, and to extol the Graces above the Gifts of the Spirit? But there are three things that will plainly demonstrate the pre-eminence. 1 Cor. 13. 1.

First, The Subjects on whom they are bestow'd.

Secondly, The End or Use unto which they serve. And,

Thirdly, The Term of their Duration or Continuance.

First, The Subjects on whom they are bestowed will give Grace vastly the pre-eminence; for Gifts like the Rain, and other Common Blessings, are showred down promiscuously on the Good and Bad; and the Light of the Spirit, like that of the Sun, shines indifferently both on the Just and Unjust. *Judas* had the Gifts of Prophesie and Miracles, as well as the other Apostles; and our Saviour hath told us, that *many will say unto him at the last day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name done many wonderful works?* Who yet shall be bid to depart from him as workers of Iniquity. So that the highest and best Gifts neither find, nor give any intrinsick worth to the persons that have them, but leave them many times as bad or worse than they found them; for many who in Christ's Name had cast out Devils, will be sentenced by Christ himself to take up their abode for ever with them. But Grace on the other hand stamps an excellence on those that receive it; for it makes them like unto God, and renders them most acceptable to him, and therefore is conferred on None but the particular Favourites and Darlings of Heaven: 'Tis only the excellent

Mat. 7. 22.

cellent ones of the Earth, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſtiles them, that walk in this *more excellent way*, when many gifted Brethren will be found in the broad way that leadeth to deſtruction. Grace is that Seal of the Spirit, of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks, whereby the Children of God *are marked and ſealed unto the day of redemption.* 'Tis by this Seal, as the ſame Apoſtle tells us, *That the Lord knoweth who are his*; and by this Sacred Stamp or Signature, we too may know whether we belong to him; for the Graces of the Spirit, are the particular marks and tokens of the Divine Favour, which are not communicated to any, but the Elect People of God. The Holy Ghoſt is not wont to *caſt theſe Pearls before Swine*, nor *is this Childrens Bread given unto Dogs*: No, this is reſerved as the peculiar Lot and Portion of the Saints, and therefore muſt far ſurpaſs thoſe Common Gifts, that are ſhared promiſcuouſly by wicked Men.

Pſal. 16. 3.

Eph. 4. 30.

2 Tim. 2. 19.

Mat. 7. 6.

Secondly, The End or Uſe to which they ſerve, will farther give Grace the pre-eminence above the *beſt gifts*: *For knowledge*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *puffeth up*, and tempts many a Man to Pride and

1 Cor. 8. 1.

Vanity, whereas 'tis *Charity* that edifieth, 'tis Grace that corrects the ſwelling quality of Gifts, that lays the foundation in Humility, and thereby builds us up in our moſt Holy Faith: The greateſt Gifts and Abilities, if not accompanied with Grace to direct the uſe of them, are ſo far from edifying, that they have in all Ages done the Church the greateſt Miſchief. How many peſtilent Errors and Schiſms are owing to the greater parts and abilities of Hereticks? What ground hath Atheiſm and Debauchery got in the World, by the Influence and Diſcourſes of the fineſt Wits? And as the ſharpeſt Razor cuts deepeſt, ſo have the quickeſt Parts made the deepeſt Wounds in Religion, and Men's Souls: ſo pernicious are the effects of their ill management, both to the Publick and Themſelves. But Grace is ſo far from being liable to theſe, or the like Abuſes, that it prevents the Evil, and corrects the abuſes of our Gifts: 'Tis this puts all their uſefulneſs into them, and makes them inſtead of doing harm, become inſtruments of much good unto the Church; and conſequently 'tis the ſanctifying of Gifts, that like the Enameling of Pearls, gives them their main luſtre and value. But,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, There is another great and ſurpaſſing excellency in the Graces above the Gifts of the Spirit, and that is the Duration or Continuance of them; for Grace hath Eternity ſtamped on it; 'tis coeval with the Spirit of God that gives it, and as Immortal as the Spirit or Soul of Man that receives it: This is more than can be ſaid of the *beſt gifts*; for of theſe the Apoſtle declares in the next Chapter, that they muſt ſhortly have an end and be done away: *Whether there be propheſies*, ſaith he, *they ſhall fail, whether there be tongues, they ſhall ceaſe, whether there be knowledge, That ſhall vaniſh away*: But *Charity* he tells us ſhall never fail, and of the Graces of the Spirit, he affirms that They ſhall abide for ever. 1 Cor. 13. 8, 9, 10.

This is an excellency that far tranſcends all other Perfections whatever; 'tis the diſgrace of all Worldly Excellencies, that they are ſhort-liv'd and vaniſhing; Riches periſh in the uſing, the pleaſures of Sin are but for a ſeaſon, Honour is but a puff of Wind, a Bubble that paſſeth away with the breath that raiſed it; yea, the moſt ſpecious and durable Accompliſhments on this ſide of Religion muſt all fail, and leave us at the

Grave: But Grace goes farther with us, and accompanies us into the Other World, where it not only leads to, but makes up the Chiefeſt part of our Felicity. St. *John* tells us, that good Men at their Death *reſt from their Labours*; that is, among other things, from the Laborious Exerciſe of their Gifts: but their good Works, and the gracious Habits of their Mind follow, and go along with them, and that not only to crown them with a Reward, but to perpetuate the very Action; for Grace differs from Glory not in Kind, but merely in Degree; and thoſe gracious Habits, that are begun and planted in us Here, will There grow up into a greater Maturity and Perfection.

Yea, Heaven is nothing elſe but the Bleſſed Manſion of Holineſs, where That Grace, that is here Militant, and daily ſtruggling with the reliques of corrupt Nature, will there be Triumphant, with a Palm of Victory in her Hand, and a Crown of Gold upon her Head, and the Spirits of Juſt Men in whom it reigns, ſhall be made perfect, and become more than Conquerors through Chriſt that loved them.

And

And now having, by the Bleſſing of God, finiſhed what I at firſt propoſed, give me leave to preſs the Exhortation of the Text, with reſpect both to the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit. And,

Firſt, Let me exhort you to *covet earneſtly the beſt gifts*; that is, to labour for the moſt uſeful and edifying Abilities, whereby you may beſt ſerve the Church, and profit your Hearers. And here if I could ever hope to prevail, methinks it might be reaſonably expected from ſuch an Aſſembly as this, conſiſting of Perſons, whoſe great buſineſs it is to inſtruct others in the Knowledge and Practice of Divine Things: Know then, my Brethren, that this is the main end of our Miniſtry, and the deſign of all our Spiritual Gifts, and therefore hither ſhould all our aims and endeavours tend: Remember that you are the Mouth of the People unto God, to make known their Requeſts unto him; and you are the Mouth of God unto the People, to make known his Will unto them: The faithful diſcharge of both theſe may indeed require no ſmall Labour, but 'twill be abundantly recompenſed with a great Reward.

In

In your Prayers then affect not Novelty or Variety of Expreſſions, which are no way pleaſing unto God: But let all your Addreſſes unto him be in fit Words, and in all the decent Poſtures of Humility and Adoration. Read the Publick Prayers of the Church with Reverence and devout Affections, that the Hearers Zeal may be enkindled by the pious Ardours of your Devotion.

In your Preaching ſhew *Uncorruptneſs, Gravity, Sincerity, and ſound Speech, that cannot be condemned, that he who is of the contrary part may be aſhamed, having no evil thing to ſay of you:* So ſhall you put a muzzle upon the prophaneſt Mouths, and cut off all occaſion from them that ſeek occaſion againſt you. Stir up your People *to Love and to good Works*; for theſe things *are good and profitable unto Men*; and when they are thus forced to approve your Labours, you will be the better able to convince Gainſayers, and to ſtrike Detractors dumb. Do not entertain Vulgar Hearers with nice and curious ſpeculations, which rather perplex than inform their Minds, but let all your Diſcourſes to them be evermore plain and practical, leaving

Tit. 2. 7,8.

leaving matters of Diſpute to the Schools, or more Learned Auditories. Avoid all things that may engender Strife, or lead to Faction, and follow thoſe things that make for Peace, and things whereby ye may edifie one another. Do not uſe your Gifts to Pride and Vain-glory, for this is to make the Breathings of the Holy Ghoſt, ſubſervient to the vain Breath of the Multitude, which cannot but *grieve the Holy Spirit of God*, and *do deſpight to the Spirit of Grace.* Beware of abuſing your Parts to the Maintenance of Schiſm and Diviſions, but rather uſe your utmoſt Prudence to heal thoſe Breaches which open too wide a gap for Atheiſm, Confuſion, and every Evil work. Suit all your Diſcourſes both to the Neceſſities, and likewiſe to the Capacities of your Hearers, having *Milk for Babes*, and *ſtronger Meat for riper Chriſtians*; In a word, Feed your Flocks with ſound Doctrine, and go before them by a Pious Example, that they may ſafely both *hear your Voice, and follow you.*

But I may not conclude without minding you of the *more excellent way*, and calling upon you to walk and keep in it; that is, to covet more earneſtly the Graces

Graces than the Gifts of the Spirit: We have ſeen how far the One excells the Other; that 'tis Grace alone that ſanctifies our Gifts, and gives them all their worth and excellence: This therefore juſtly calls for our moſt earneſt Prayers and Endeavours; *'Tis good*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *to have the heart eſtabliſhed with grace*, yea much better than to have the Head ſtuffed with Knowledg; for this may but aggravate our Condemnation, whilſt the other will ſecure and increaſe our Felicity. Grace is indeed the greateſt thing that God can give, or that we can receive; for 'tis a Ray of the Divinity, the very Character or Image of God ſtamped upon the Soul, and what higher thing can the moſt elevated Ambition raiſe our Wiſhes to? Wherefore let our deſires and endeavours after it bear ſome proportion to its tranſcendent worth and excellency; let us open our Mouths wide, that we may be filled with the Spirit, and let the cry of our Devotions, like the acclamations at the Building of the Temple, be evermore, *Grace, Grace.* But let Us eſpecially, to whom the World hath given the ſtile of Spiritual Perſons, pray for a double portion of the Spirit, that God would furniſh us with

Heb. 13 9.

Pſal. 81. 40.

Zech 4. 7.

with his Gifts, to promote his Glory and the good of Mankind, and ſanctifie them with his Grace, that we may uſe them to thoſe ends, that as we excel others in the Holineſs of our Profeſſion, ſo we may in the Holineſs of our Lives too, *adding to your knowledge vertue, to vertue temperance, to temperance patience, to patience brotherly-kindneſs, and to brotherly-kindneſs Charity* 2 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 7. or if theſe things be in us and abound, they will truly enoble our Minds, adorn our Profeſſion, and dignifie us far above all Earthly Preferments. In a word, my brethren! ſee that ye come behind in no Gift, being enrich'd in all knowledge, and in all utterance, that ye may ſpeak as the *Oracles* of God, and that all your Speeches may adminiſter Grace to the Hearers: So ſhall ye ſhine as Lights in this World, and as Stars of the firſt Magnitude in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The

with his Gifts, to promote his Glory and
the good of Mankind, and fanctifie them
with his Grace, that we may ufe them
to thofe ends, that as we excel others in
the holineſs of our Profeſſion, ſo we may
in the holineſs of our Lives too, abiding to
our knowledge exerſize, to watchfulneſs, &c.
watchful patterns, to patience brotherly-
kindneſs, and to brotherly kindneſs Charity
and all thefe things being in us and abound,
they will truly ennoble our Minds, adorn
our Profeſſion, and dignifie us far above
all Earthly Preferments. In a word, my
Brethren I ſee that ye come behind in
no Gift, being enrich'd in all know-
ledge, and in all utterance, that ye may
ſpeak as the Oracles of God, and that all
your Speeches may adminiſter Grace to
the Hearers: So ſhall ye ſhine as Lights
in this World, and as Stars of the firſt
Magnitude in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The

The EXCELLENCY OF *CHARITY* Above the Gift of *Tongues*.

1 Cor. XIII. 1.

Though I speak with the Tongues of Men, and of Angels, and have not Charity, *I am become as ſounding Braſs, or a tinkling Cymbal*, &c.

THESE, and the following Words, help to ſet forth the exceeding great worth and excellence of the Gifts, or Graces of *Charity*, above all other Gifts, or Graces whatever. In the foregoing Chapter, the *Apoſtle* had been treating

at large concerning ſpiritual Gifts, Ordinary and Miraculous; both which were rife and common in the Church of *Corinth* in thoſe early Days of Chriſtianity; And having ſhew'd the Nature, the Number, and the Uſefulneſs of them, he cloſes that Chapter with an Exhortation; To *Covet earneſtly the beſt Gifts*; that is, to deſire, and labour chiefly for thoſe of them, that were of the beſt Uſe and Benefit for the Edification of the Church.

But becauſe the beſt Gifts are all uſeleſs, and ſometimes dangerous, without Grace to direct and ſanctifie them, the Apoſtle there adds; *And yet ſhew I unto you a more excellent Way.*

Now, this more excellent Way, is the way of *Charity*; which conſiſts in the unfeigned Love of God, and our Neighbour, together with hearty Deſires of doing Good, both to our Selves, and to all Men. And in this way, he would have the *Corinthians*, and all Chriſtians, to walk and perſevere to the laſt, to which end he ſpends this whole 13*th* Chapter, in the Commendation of this moſt excellent Grace; which having ſo divine a Subject, and being of ſuch ſingular Uſe and Benefit to all Chriſtians,

it

may not be an unprofitable Task, to explain the Chapter in all its Parts, and to enforce the Vertues contain'd in it, on the Practice of all Men. And that I may do it the more fully and clearly, I ſhall obſerve in it theſe Four memorable Things.

1*ſt*, The Excellency of this Grace of *Charity* above all the Gifts of the Spirit, from the Firſt, to the Fourth Verſe.

2*ly*, A Deſcription of the ſeveral Acts and Properties of *Charity*; from the Fourth, to the Eighth Verſe.

3*ly*, The never-failing Duration and Reward of *Charity*, from the Eighth to the Thirteenth Verſe. And,

Laſtly, The Excellency of *Charity* above the other Graces of the Spirit, in the Cloſe of the Chapter.

Theſe things comprize the whole of this Chapter; by a diſtinct handling whereof, we may, by the Bleſſing of God, attain to a full knowledge of this moſt excellent Grace.

Accordingly therefore I begin with the Firſt Part of the Chapter, containing the tranſcendent Excellency, or Pre-eminence of the Grace of *Charity*, above

all the moſt exalted, and admir'd Gifts of the Spirit. To clear this, the Apoſtle begins with the Gift of Tongues, becauſe the *Corinthians* admir'd and glory'd much in this Gift; labouring to ſet forth themſelves, by their Knowledge and Skill in divers Languages, with other Arts, and Ornaments of Speech, which are expreſs'd here in our Text, by the Tongues of Men and of Angels; ſaying, *Tho' I ſpeak with the Tongues of Men and of Angels, and yet have not* Charity, *I am no better than ſounding Braſs, or a tinckling Cymbal.* Where the Apoſtle preferrs this Grace, vaſtly above the Gift of Tongues, either of Men or Angels. Not that the Angels, which are ſpiritual and immaterial Beings, can be properly ſaid to have Tongues, or other corporeal Parts; but to repreſent the higheſt and greateſt Elegancies of Speech: for as the Beauty of St. *Stephen* is compared to the Face of an Angel, and as Angels Food is ſaid to ſignify the higheſt and nobleſt Proviſions; ſo, the moſt charming and perſwaſive Eloquence, is repreſented by the Tongue of an Angel; which yet, if not guided by Grace, or govern'd by *Charity*, may prove rather a vain and pernicious Talent, than an

Inſtru-

nſtrument of any Good to our ſelves, others: for *Knowledge* (ſaith the poſtle) *puffeth up, and leads many into e Snare and Condemnation of the Devil*; ut 'tis *Charity that edifieth*; that lays the oundation of a true Faith in Chriſt, and iſeth upon it, the Structure of our Sal-ation.

Now, the Three great Excellencies the Gift of Tongues, are, 1*ſt*, The iverſity, or Variety of Languages. 2*ly*, he Elegancy, or Curioſity of Speech; nd, 3*ly*, The Readineſs and Volubility the Tongue: All which, if us'd for anity and Oſtentation, and not to the nds, for which they were given, will nd only to the Miſchief of Mankind, nd the Miſery of them that have them.

As for the Diverſity, or Variety of anguages; that was ſent firſt as a urſe, rather than a Bleſſing; for it be-an with the bold Builders of *Babel*, who defiance of God Almighty, wickedly tempted to build a Tower, whoſe Top ould reach up to Heaven, to ſecure emſelves from the Power and Ven-eance of their Maker. But God All-ighty ſoon confounded their Language, o as they could not underſtand one an-ther, and thereby defeated their Deſign.

and put a ſtop to their inſolent and diabolical Attempt. And may all that would turn *Zion* into *Babel*, meet with the like Confuſion.

Had the World continued, as it was before, of one Tongue, and of one Language, Men of all Nations might have more freely and eaſily underſtood, and convers'd with each other; and much of that Time, which is now ſpent in the laborious ſtudy of the Tongues, which is but the Bark or out-ſide of Learning, might be ſav'd, and better employ'd in the Search of the Matter, and Senſe contain'd under them: ſo that the diverſity of Tongues and Languages, may be reckon'd, rather an Infelicity than a Perfection, and ſo, may not be much boaſted of, or glory'd in.

Now the miraculous Deſcent of the *Holy Ghoſt* on the Day of *Pentecoſt*, is by ſome thought to be deſign'd as a Remedy againſt this Confuſion of Tongues at *Babel*: For we read in *Acts* the 2*d*, That the Holy Spirit came down, not only in the Sound of a *Mighty Ruſhing Wind*, as a Token of Inſpiration, but likewiſe *ſate upon the Heads of the Apoſtles in the ſhape of fiery cloven Tongues*, to ſignify the Warmth of their Zeal, and the

Diverſity

Diverſity of Languages, by which they were to expreſs it: For they ſuddenly *began to ſpeak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.* Verſe 3d. Meaning, that by this Gift of divers Tongues, they could ſpeak ſo, as to be underſtood by Men of all Nations and Languages; *Parthians, Medes, Elamites,* and all other Inhabitants of the moſt diſtant Countries, to their great Amazement, heard them ſpeak in their own Tongues, the *wonderful Works of God*; as we read at large in that Chapter. By this means, they, who were before, but illiterate Fiſhermen and Mechanicks, and ſcarce underſtood their own Mother Tongue, were endow'd with a Faculty of underſtanding all Languages, and ſpeaking to Men of all Countries, to their Edification and Comfort: ſo that what was loſt by the Confuſion of Tongues, at *Babel*, is abundantly ſupplied by the Extraordinary Gift of Tongues, conferr'd on the *Apoſtles* upon the Day of *Pentecoſt*. And what was at firſt inflicted as a Judgment and a Curſe, is, by the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of Providence, converted into a great and invaluable Bleſſing: For 'twas by this Extraordinary Gift of Tongues, that the Apoſtles

were enabled to propagate the Gospel to all Nations; to spread Christianity into all Parts of the World, to which they were sent; and that we of these Islands enjoy the Light of the Gospel to this Day. And 'tis still, by the ordinary Study of the Tongues, in which the holy Scriptures are written, that we are instructed in the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

But how useful or necessary soever the Gift or Study of the Tongues may be to those ends; yet, if they are unaccompanied with *Charity*, or a Desire of Edifying, they are no better than the empty Noise of *sounding Brass*, or the fainter Melody of a *tinkling Cymbal*; that is, they are utterly Vain and Useless. And therefore St. *Paul* told the Corinthians, that *tho' he spake with Tongues more than they all; yet in the Church he had rather speak Five words with his understanding, that by his voice he might teach others also, than Ten Thousand words in an unknown Tongue.* 1 Cor. 14. 18, 19.

And as the Diversity, and Variety of of Tongues, so,

Secondly, The Elegancy, and Curiosity of Language, without this Grace to direct and sanctify it, can be of no avail: Insomuch, that could we deliver our

Minds

Minds in the moſt florid and politeſt manner; were we Maſters of the moſt flowing Rhetorick that ever dropt from the Tongue, or Pen of any Mortal; yea, had we the Tongue of an Angel, accompliſh'd with all the Charms of divine and human Eloquence; yet all this without *Charity*, or a Deſign of doing Good, is all but Vanity and Oſtentation, and of no more Uſe or Benefit, than the Confuſion of Tongues at *Babel*, and therefore we find St. *Paul* again declaring, that *his Speech and Preaching was not with the enticing words of Man's Wiſdom, but in demonſtration of the Spirit and of Power; that our Faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of Men, but in the power of God.* 1 Cor. 2. 4, 5. He did not garniſh his Speech with the Flowers of Rhetorick, nor poliſh his Preaching with the high Strains and Ornaments of Oratory; But his Diſcourſes were plain, practical and profitable to the Hearers; he affected not to tickle the Ears, or pleaſe the Fancies of Men, with the flouriſh and finery of Words, but to inform their Minds, to reach the Hearts, and move the Affections of thoſe that heard him. In ſhort, his Diſcourſes were pious, plain and powerful, and prevail'd more to the Converſion of

Souls, than all the pompous Arts of Speech, and the most Charming Curiosity of Language.

Lastly, As the Elegance, so the Readiness of Speech, and the greatest Volubility of the Tongue, without this Grace of *Charity* to guide it aright, is but a vain and insignificant Accomplishment, and availeth nothing. It may serve indeed to seduce, and mislead weak and unwary People into Errors and *Heresies*; and, is a piece of that *cunning Craftiness, whereby too many lay in wait to Deceive*: But is no way acceptable to God, nor hath any the least Efficacy, or Prevalence at all with him. There is indeed in some Persons a more than ordinary Quickness of Apprehension, Promptness of Speech, and Fluency of Expression, without Fear or Hesitation, which if duly manag'd, and applied to good and proper Subjects, is a very useful and excellent Gift: But if us'd amiss, to the perverting of Justice, the wresting of Scriptures, or other vile and sinful Purposes, it becomes a very dangerous and pernicious Talent: for this hath done great Mischief, and made many to prefer extempore Effusions, and sudden Conceptions and Expressions

in Prayer, before wiſer, and more deliberate Compoſures; and thereby drawn many ignorant and injudicious Perſons, into *Schiſms* and *Conventicles*, to the great Diſturbance of the Peace and Unity of the Church: Yea, the moſt peſtilent Errors and Hereſies, that ever infeſted the Church, owe their Riſe to the Voluble Tongues, and Diſcontents of *Hereticks*: and as the ſharpeſt Razor cuts deepeſt, ſo the ſharpeſt Wits, have given the greateſt Wounds to Religion, and the ſacred Myſteries of the Goſpel. The ſumm of all then is, that the greateſt Skill and Knowledge of the Tongues, the moſt polite Elegance and Curioſity of Language, and the greateſt Promptneſs and Fluency of Speech, if ſeparated from Grace, are of no value; and if not directed to good Ends, become rather Engines of Miſchief, than Inſtruments of Good to Mankind. The Reaſon whereof is plain, for the great End of Speech is, for the uſe of Edifying, to inform Mens Minds, to perſwade to Vertue, and to better Men's Lives. *He that ſpeaketh* (ſays the Apoſtle) *ſpeaketh to Edification, Exhortation and Comfort.* And conſequently, where theſe things are wanting, they loſe their End, and degene-

generate into vain Babling: and where they puff up any with vain Conceits of their own Parts, they tend more to the Hurt, than to the Happineſs of the Hearers: whereas Grace corrects the ſwelling quality of Gifts, ſanctifies our Parts, and renders them ſerviceable to the good of one another. In a word, *Charity* gives all the Excellency, and Uſefulneſs to the Gift of *Tongues*, and therefore, muſt be of it ſelf of greater Excellency.

From this Diſcourſe we may learn, not to ſet too high a Price upon the Gift of *Tongues*, nor value our ſelves too much upon it; for that recommends us not unto God, who is not taken with the multitude or variety of Words; nor does it add any intrinſick Worth or Excellency to our Perſons, for this Gift is often found in the vileſt and worſt of Men, and is too frequently employ'd in the worſt of Services.

The Tongue indeed is the Glory of a Man, when 'tis us'd to the Glory of God, and the Good of our Neighbour: but when 'tis otherwiſe employ'd, it proves a Shame to our Selves, and a Detriment to Others. St. *James* ſtyles it, *A Fire, a World of Iniquity, that ſets on fire the whole*

whole Courſe of Nature, and is it ſelf ſet on fire of Hell.

St. *Paul*, here in our Text, compares the loftieſt Strains of Rhetorick, to the *Sounding of Braſs*, or the Muſick of a Kettle; and the moſt pleaſing Charms of Eloquence, to the ſofter Melody of a *Tinkling Cymbal*. The one grating, and the other only tickling the Ear, and neither of them bringing any laſting Benefit or Profit to the Hearers: and therefore, he elſwhere adviſes the Romans, *Not to think too highly of themſelves upon the account of theſe things, but to think ſoberly, according to what God hath given to every one the meaſure of Faith.* Rom. 12. Wherefore to conclude this Point, It will highly concern us to ſtudy, not only to acquire the Knowledge of the Tongues; but likewiſe to ask for Grace to uſe them aright, and to apply them to the great and good Ends for which they are given: Namely, to be Heralds to proclaim the Honour of God, and Inſtruments to promote the Peace and Comfort of our Neighbours, which things alone can put all the Worth and Value into the Tongues of Men and of Angels: ſo ſhall they ſpeak for us to the preſerving our Memory here, and plead for us at the Tri-

Tribunal of Heaven, to the promoting of our eternal Happineſs hereafter; where they will be ever imploy'd in ſounding forth the Praiſes of our Maker, and in ſinging unceſſant Hallelujahs to him that ſitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb for evermore.

The

The EXCELLENCY OF *CHARITY* Above the Gift of *Prophecy*.

1 Cor. XIII. 2.

And though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and underſtand all Myſteries, and all Knowledge; and though I have all Faith, ſo that I could remove Mountains, and have no Charity, *I am nothing.*

HAVING from the foregoing Verſe, ſhew'd the Excellency of *Charity* above the Gift of *Tongues*, which are apt many times to beget

beget Aſtoniſhment and Admiration: I proceed from the words immediately following, to ſhew its Excellency above the Gifts of Prophecy, of Faith, and of working Miracles, which the Apoſtle does in the words of our Text; *Though I have the Gifts of Prophecy, and underſtand all Myſteries and all Knowledge, tho' I have all Faith, ſo that I could remove Mountains, and have no* Charity, *I am nothing.* Where it will be neceſſary to ſhew,

Firſt, What is meant by the Gift of *Prophecy*, and what is included or comprehended under it.

Secondly, That how Noble, or Uſeful ſoever a Gift it is, is yet far excell'd by the Grace of *Charity*, and is of no Uſe, Vertue, or Value without it.

Thirdly, Its Excellency above the Faith of Miracles, and the Doing many wonderful Works.

And, *Laſtly*, To infer ſome profitable Uſe and Application from the whole. For the

Firſt, The Gift of *Prophecy*, is taken in divers and various Senſes in ſacred Writ; as,

Firſt,

First, 'Tis taken for the Gift of Foreknowing and Foretelling things to come; *viz.* Contingent Things, that have no viſible Dependence upon any Natural Cauſes. Thus *Moſes* and the Prophets of old, who foretold the Coming of the *Meſſias*, his Incarnation, Birth, Death, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, ſome Thouſands of Years before they came to paſs, were ſaid to be endow'd with the Gift of *Prophecy*. *To him give all the Prophets witneſs* (ſaith St. *Peter*) Acts 10. 43. and Chapter 3. 24. *All the Prophets from Samuel*, to thoſe that follow'd him, have *foretold of thoſe days*. Thus *Agabus*, who ſtood up and ſignified by the Spirit, that there ſhould be *a Dearth throughout all the World, which came to paſs in the Days of Claudius Cæſar*, was reckon'd among the Prophets; *Acts* 11. 27, 28. The Forewarning St. *Paul* of the Bonds, and Impriſonment that awaited him at *Jeruſalem*, is aſcrib'd to the Dictates of the *Holy Ghoſt*. Chapt. 21. 10. And the Four Daughters of *Philip*, the Deacon and Evangeliſt, who were Virgins that predicted ſome future Events that came to paſs, were ſaid to *Prophecy*, Verſe 9*th*.

Secondly, Prophecying is ſome times taken for Revealing the Mind and Will of

of God by Inſpiration; thus the Apoſtles, and other inſpired Men under the New Teſtament, by Revealing to us the Accompliſhment of the Promiſes and Predictions, and other future Events under the Old, and delivering to us the Oracles of God, are reckon'd in the Number of *Prophets*. Hence the Doctrine of the Goſpel is by St. *Peter* ſtyl'd, *A ſure word of Prophecy, whereunto we do well to take heed, as to a light ſhining in a dark place.* Adding, that in the delivery of it, *Holy Men ſpake and wrote, not by will of Man, but as they were mov'd by the holy Ghoſt.* 2 *Pet.* 1. 21.

Thirdly, Prophecying is ſome times taken for Expounding and Interpreting the holy Scriptures, and Applying them to the Uſe and Benefit of the People. To this purpoſe is that of the Apoſtle, *Deſire earneſtly ſpiritual Gifts, but rather that ye may Prophecy*; in the 1 *Cor.* 14. 1. that is, tho' other Gifts are deſirable, yet chuſe rather that of Prophecying, whereby ye may rightly underſtand the Scriptures your ſelves, and clearly explain them to others, for *he that Prophecyeth* (ſaith he) *ſpeaketh unto Men, to Edification, Exhortation and Comfort.* Verſe 3d, where we learn, That as there is a Di-

verſity

verſity of Gifts, ſo there is a Preference of ſome above others; and St. *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*; *I would that ye all ſpake with Tongues, but rather that ye Prophecyed, for greater is he that Prophecyeth, than he that ſpeaketh with Tongues, except he interpret, that the Church may receive Edifying.* Verſe 5. and therefore wills them to ſeek to excel each other to the Edifying of the Church, which is, or ought to be, the great End of all their Zeal and Labour about Spiritual Gifts, Verſe 12.

Laſtly, To mention no more,

Prophecying is ſome times taken for an extraordinary Gift of Praying, Preaching, or Singing by Inſpiration; of this is that of the Apoſtle in the forecited Chapter, *I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with Underſtanding alſo, I will ſing with the Spirit, and I will ſing with the Underſtanding alſo.* Verſe 15. meaning, that he Pray'd by inſpir'd Forms, dictated by the holy Spirit: and Praiſed God by inſpir'd Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs, indited by the holy Ghoſt; both which were riſe, and frequently us'd in the Days of Inſpiration, and are expreſs'd in Scripture by the Name of *Prophecying*. Of this Kind was the Song of *Moſes*, the Prayers and Pſalms of *David*, and of

other Prophets, who were ſaid to Prophecy to the *Pſaltery and Harp, Tabret and Pipe*, 1 Sam. 10. 5. Such was the Song of *Zacharias* in the New Teſtament, who is ſaid to be fill'd with the holy Ghoſt, and Prophecyed, in uttering the Hymn of the *Benedictus*, ſaying, *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, who hath viſited and redeemed his People*, &c. Luke 1. 67. St. *Paul* ſpeaks of *Teaching and Admoniſhing one another in Pſalms, and Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs, Singing and making Melody in our Hearts unto the Lord*, Eph. 5. which things are attributed to Prophecy, or a particular Gift of the holy Ghoſt to that purpoſe.

Moreover, under this Gift of Prophecy, the Apoſtle here in our Text comprizes the Underſtanding of all Myſteries: *Though I underſtand all Myſteries.*

Now, a Myſtery in the general Acceptation of the Word, is ſet to ſignify ſome thing that is obſcure, hidden, or hard to be underſtood, that cannot be well known or apprehended without a Revelation, nor fully comprehended after it is Reveal'd. The Myſteries of this ſort are many, and of different Kinds: For there are Myſteries in Nature, in Art, in Government, and Religion; and

and the general Expreſſion, Of Underſtanding all Myſteries may perhaps refer to, and include them all. The Myſteries of Nature, are ſuch as theſe; The Riſe and Spring of Natural Cauſes and Effects; the Chain and Dependence of them upon one another; the Deviations from the Ordinary Courſe of Nature, together with the Grounds and Reaſons of them, many of which are very Myſterious, and perhaps, after all our Enquiries, paſt finding out. The Motions and Influences of the Heavenly Bodies: The Ebbing and Flowing of the Sea, The Loadſtone's drawing Iron: The Needle of the Compaſs, ſtill turning to and obſerving the North-pole, and the like; the underſtanding whereof is a Noble piece of Science, and worthy the ſtudy and ſearch of Rational and Inquiſitive Minds.

The Myſteries of Art, are the Inventions and Obſervations added to, and grounded upon, the Courſe of Nature; ſuch are all the Liberal Arts and Sciences ſtudied and improv'd in all the Schools of Learning; as alſo all Mechanical Arts and Myſteries of Trade, wherein many are train'd up for the mutual benefit, commerce and ſubſiſtence of Mankind;

which is a very uſeful and neceſſary piece of Knowledge, ſuited to the Wants and Needs we all have of one another.

The Myſteries of Government, are the political Arts and Intriegues of State; A deep inſight into the ſpring and tendency of human Actions, the making and executing of Good Laws, the encouraging of Good, and diſcouraging of bad Subjects, together with a right underſtanding of the Arts and Methods both of War and Peace, all which are fit and neceſſary to be known by ſuch as are at the Helm of Government.

But above and before all, are The Myſteries of Religion, *viz.* The profound Truths deliver'd to us in the holy Scriptures; Truths, that are above the Diſcovery, and Comprehenſion of Human Reaſon, and come to us only by Divine Revelation: Such as the Doctrines of the holy Trinity, The Incarnation of the Son of God, The Redemption of the World by the Death and Paſſion of our Bleſſed Saviour, The Reſurrection of the Dead, and the like; which are in Scripture ſtil'd, *The Myſteries of God, the Myſteries of Godlineſs*, and *the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven:* which profound Truths are to be made the Objects

of

of our Faith, to be Believ'd upon the Word of him who is Truth it ſelf, and not to be ſcann'd by our weak and ſhallow Reaſoning. This being the moſt Sublime, the moſt Divine and Excellent Knowledge we can attain unto; which made St. *Paul* deſire to know nothing elſe, and to account all other things but as *Loſs and Dung, in compariſon of the Excellency of this Knowledge of Chriſt.*

Furthermore, Under this Gift of Prophecy, the Apoſtle here comprizes all other Knowledge, ſaying, *tho' I had all Knowledge*; that is, a full Inſight into all things paſt, preſent, and to come, which taking in the whole Circumference of Being and Learning, contains in it the utmoſt Bounds, and Extent of all Knowledge. In ſhort, Prophecy includes in it all Parts and Branches of Knowledge, both Divine and Human; and extends to all things that are Knowable by us.

And yet, all this without the Grace of *Charity*, to direct to the right End and Uſe of it, is nothing worth. Yea, the Largeneſs of our Knowledge, without a due Employment and Application of it, will ſerve only to enlarge our Reckoning, and aggravate our Condemnation;

In which Senſe that of *Solomon* is truly verified, *He that encreaſes Knowledge, encreaſes Sorrow*: for *he that knoweth his Maſter's Will, and doth it not, will be beaten with more Stripes, than he that was ignorant of it.* So that, How Noble and Deſirable ſoever a Gift this of *Prophecy* is, tho' it may let us into all the Secrets of Art and Nature, and help us to penetrate into the deepeſt Myſteries of Providence, Religion and Policy; yet if it be deſtitute of, and unattended with *Charity*, it will avail nothing. The foreſeeing, and foretelling Things to come, will but foreſtal their own Miſery, when they predict the Misfortunes of others. The Expounding and Applying the holy Scriptures to the Ends of Edification, which is a very uſeful Talent, if not accompanied with the Practice of the Rules, and Duties preſcrib'd by it, will tend more to the Shame and Reproach of the Teacher, than to the Profit and Advantage of the Learners; by which we ſee the Excellency of *Charity*, above the Gift of *Prophecy*, together with all the Science, Wiſdom and Knowledge contain'd in, or compriz'd under it.

Thirdly, The Apoſtle prefers this Grace of *Charity* before, and above, a wonder-working

working *Faith*, in the Words of our Text, ſaying, *And tho' I have all Faith, ſo that I could remove Mountains, and have no* Charity, *I am nothing*. Among the other Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt reckon'd up in the foregoing Chapter, we find mention made of *this Faith*, Verſ. 9th, *To another Faith by the ſame Spirit*, where by Faith is not meant a ſaving, juſtifying Faith, which recommends us unto God, and renders our Perſons and Services acceptable and well-pleaſing in his ſight; for ſuch a Faith ever works by Love, and is never ſever'd from *Charity*, as is here ſuppos'd: but by Faith here, is underſtood, the Faith of Miracles, deſcrib'd here by a Power of *Removing Mountains*, according to that Promiſe of our Bleſſed Saviour to his Apoſtles, *If ye have Faith, ye ſhall ſay to this Mountain, be thou remov'd or caſt into the midſt of the Sea, and it ſhall be done*; Matth. 21. 21. And Elſewhere; *To him that Believeth all things are poſſible:* For tho' with us thoſe *things are impoſſible, yet with God all things are poſſible*, Chap. 19. 26. Now this Faith is ſuch a ſtrong Perſwaſion of the Power of God, as engages his Omnipotence to Act for, and with them, and to remove Mountains of Difficulties,

that ſtand in their way. And this is grounded on that Grant, made to the Apoſtles and others, whereby they were enabled to work Miracles, and do many wonderful Things, for the Confirmation of the Truth of the Goſpel. For which End, we read of their giving Sight to the Blind, Feet to the Lame, and Healing all Manner of Diſeaſes with a Word Speaking; at the Sight whereof, many were converted to the Faith, and the Doctrine of Chriſt prevail'd every where: which continued in the Church for ſome time, and was exercis'd by many for the Propagation of the Goſpel.

And yet this miraculous and wonder-working Faith, that was able to do all theſe mighty Things, without *Charity* was nothing worth. So St. *Paul*, more than once, tells us, That tho' he had Faith enough to do all theſe miraculous and extraordinary Works, even to the moveing of Mountains, which one would think were great enough to make him Some-body; yet without this divine Grace to ſanctify them to good Purpoſes, he owns and pronounces himſelf to be *Nothing*.

Indeed, a Faith that works by Love, and is conducted by *Charity*, is in the Sight

Sight of God of great Price, and highly recommends us to him; but the ſtrongeſt Faith, that is void of *Charity*, is of no worth or avail with him. It may indeed and will be (as our Saviour tells us) pleaded by ſome in the Day of Judgment, in Bar of the Sentence to be pronounc'd againſt them, for *many will ſay in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not Prophecyed in thy Name? and in thy Name done many wonderful Works?* But neither of them will afford any Relief to the Workers of Iniquity; And all other Knowledge will be but poor Comfort, when they ſhall hear God ſaying unto them, *I know you not, depart from me ye Workers of Iniquity.* Which things fully demonſtrate the Excellency of *Charity*, not only above the Gifts of Tongues, but above that of *Prophecy*, and the Gifts of working Miracles alſo, which have been found in the worſt of Men; for we read of *Balaam* among the Prophets of the Old Teſtament, and *Judas* among the Apoſtles of the New; who no doubt Prophecyed, and did many wonderful Works as well as the Reſt; But wanting Grace to direct them to good Ends, ſerv'd more to enhance their Miſery, than to advance their Happineſs.

But

But here we must note, that St. *Paul* does not in all this, detract from the just Honour of Spiritual Gifts, nor decry the due Use of Human Learning in Religion; for he wish'd in the behalf of the *Corinthians*, that they all speak with Tongues, and Prophecyed: and warn'd the *Thessalonians*, *Not to despise Prophecying*, but rather, to honour and attend it, as the Gift and Ordinance of God; an Instrument of his Glory, and a Means of promoting their own Salvation: But the whole Design of the Apostle herein is, to perswade us not to over-value, or rely too much upon these Gifts, as the chief, or only things to be coveted or sought after; but to labour principally for the Graces of the Spirit, which can alone adorn, and answer the Ends of them: for 'tis *Charity*, that corrects the swelling Quality of Knowledge, which is too apt to puff up, and 'tis the sanctifying of Gifts, that like the Carving and Polishing of Marble, gives it its chief Ornament and Value, which should teach us above all other Things to follow after *Charity*, and as the Apostle directs, in the whole Course of our Lives, to walk in this *more excellent Way*, and that will bring us at last to the most excellent End, even a

Crown

Crown of Glory and everlasting Felicity in the Highest Heavens: Which God grant, *&c.*

The EXCELLENCY OF CHARITY

The

The EXCELLENCY OF *CHARITY* Above the Gift of *Alms-giving.*

1 Cor. XIII. 3.

And though I beſtow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and though I give my Body to be burnt, and have not Charity, *it profiteth me nothing.*

IN theſe Words the Apoſtle goes on to ſet forth the tranſcendent Worth and Excellency of *Charity*, by preferring it,

Firſt, Above the largeſt Bounty and Liberality to the Poor, and

Secondly,

Secondly, Above *Martyrdom* it ſelf, or Dying for the Name of Chriſt, Two of the Higheſt and Nobleſt Acts of Vertue and Religion, as will be ſeen in the Handling of them. And,

Firſt, The Apoſtle here prefers *Charity* before the moſt liberal *Alms-giving*, or the Largeſt Bounty to the Poor, in theſe words, *tho' I beſtow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and have not* Charity, *it profiteth me nothing.*

The Feeding, Clothing and Providing for the Poor, is in Scripture made one of the chiefeſt Acts and Duties of the Chriſtian Religion, that hath many Precepts to Require it, and many Promiſes to Reward it. *He that giveth to the Poor* (ſaith *Solomon*) *lendeth to the Lord, and look what He layeth out ſhall be paid him again with Intereſt:* What is this way beſtow'd, is not loſt, or thrown away, as too many imagin, but lent unto the Lord, who will repay it with the greateſt Advantage; 'tis put into ſafe Hands, which will ſecure and ſweeten all the Reſt; and therefore the Apoſtle wills us, *not to forget to do Good, and to Communicate, for with ſuch Sacrifices God is well pleaſed.* And elſewhere, he *Charges all that are rich in this World to be rich in good Works,*

Pr. 19. 17.

Hebr. 13. 16.

Works, to be ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal Life; yea, by the Account we have of the Proceedings of the Last-Day of Judgment, our future Happiness or Misery, will depend much upon our Doing, or not Doing those Acts of Bounty and Beneficence to the Poor; for they that have relieved Christ in his distressed Members, will be set at his Right-Hand, and crown'd with everlasting Glory: But they who have refused or neglected this great Duty, will be set at his Left-Hand, and doom'd to endless Misery and Torment, as you may read at large in the 25th Chap. of St. *Matthew*. In short, we are often call'd upon to *give Alms of all that we have*, with a Promise of Receiving for it a *Treasure in Heaven*; But yet care must be taken of doing this Duty aright, or else we may give all that we have, and be destitute of *Charity*, to prevent which, Regard must be had to the Matter, the Manner, and the Measure of our Alms; for else our Text tells us, that we *may give all our Goods to feed the Poor, and yet have no* Charity, for want of a good Principle moving to it, of good Means

to

to carry it on, and a good End to which it is directed: all which things are neceſſary to conſtitute and compleat this Grace of *Charity*. As,

Firſt, Care muſt be taken of the Matter of our Alms, which muſt be only of what we may truly and juſtly call our own; 'tis to give Alms of our own, not of another's Goods; we may not take from One to give to Another, or Rob *Peter* to pay *Paul*. God Almighty, who hates Robbery for a Burnt-offering, will not accept of ſtoln Goods for Alms; theſe things muſt be reſtor'd to the right Owners, and may not be diſpos'd of by thoſe who have no Right, either to give or receive them; for that is rather Theft or Robbery, than *Charity*.

And as we are to have Regard to the Matter of our Alms, that we give nothing but what is our own, ſo are we to have an Eye to the Manner of giving it:

As *Firſt*, We may not give Alms for Vanity and Oſtentation; like the Phariſees, who Sounded a Trumpet before their Alms, to alarm Spectators to come and behold their Bounty; this is rather Vain-glory than *Charity*, and loſes both the Name and Reward of it. Thence we find one of theſe Phariſees Boaſting of his

his Righteousness, and thinking himself better than other Men, because he gave Alms and Tithes of all that he possess'd, supposing that God would justify him for it as much as he did himself: But our Saviour, who knew his Heart, and the corrupt Designs he had in it, rather condemn'd his Hypocrisy, than commended his pretended *Charity*, and sent home the poor Publican, who restor'd his ill-gotten Goods, justified, before the proud Pharisee, who spent his in a Vain-glorious Show of *Charity*.

And as we may not do such good Works out of Vain-glory, to be seen of Men; so neither may they proceed from a *foolish Pity*, which we say *spoils a City*; that is, not from any true Love to God, or our Neighbour, but from a natural Pity to see any in Want, without any regard to the Cause of it, which is often their own Idleness, or Neglecting the Means to get out of it, by Labour and Diligence in a Calling which they decline, to be maintain'd by Laziness and Beggary: to relieve such, is rather Profuseness than *Charity*, and *profiteth nothing*. The Apostle's Rule is, *They that will not Work must not Eat*: calling them disorderly Persons that work not at all,

who

who are rather to be Corrected than Reliev'd: for the one, will force them to labour with the Hand the thing that is good; the other, will give too great Encouragement to Idleneſs, and other vile Enormities.

And here I cannot but commend the pious Inſtitution and Uſe of *Charity-Schools*; whereby many poor Children are educated in the Knowledge and ſound Principles of Religion, for the Saving of their Souls: And likewiſe bred up in honeſt Trades and Callings, for the Suſtenance of their Bodies; by both which, they not only eſcape the many evil and doleful Effects of Idleneſs, but become very uſeful and profitable Members of the Common-wealth; and therefore, to contribute to the Encreaſe and Encouragement of ſuch Schools, is one of the ways of doing Good, with which God is well Pleas'd, and will amply Reward it at the Laſt-day.

Again, For the Manner of Giving, it muſt be, not grudgingly, but willingly, not extorted by Importunity, but of a ready Mind, for *God loveth a Chearful Giver*. He is delighted with Freewill-Offerings, but hates thoſe unwilling Sacrifices, that muſt be dragg'd to the Altar.

Then for the Measure of Giving, it must be, not sparingly, but with a liberal and bountiful Hand: from him that hath much, much is expected, from him that hath little, less will be accepted, as every one hath receiv'd the Gift, so let him Minister of the same as good *Stewards of the manifold Grace of God, who accepteth according to what a Man hath, and not according to what he hath not. Knowing that as a Man Soweth, so shall he Reap, he that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth plentifully shall reap plentifully.*

1 Pet. 4. 10.

These are some of the main Ingredients or Qualifications of *Charity*, which in short, must proceed from a good Principle, carried on by good Means, and be directed to a good End, to make it an Acceptable Oblation.

For the Principle, it must proceed, not from any thoughts of Merit or Vainglory, but from a true Love of God, and our Neighbour.

For the End, it must be directed, not to our own Honour, but to the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind. Our Alms-giving must be accompanied with the other Acts and Properties of *Charity*, mention'd in this Chapter, Else like a Branch

Branch ſeparated from the Stock, it can yield no Fruit, but withers away and profiteth nothing. In a word, 'Tis a Deſire of doing Good, a Senſe of our Duty to God, and of the Wants of our Brother, that gives all the Worth and Excellency to our Liberality; without which the largeſt Acts of Bounty, even to the beſtowing of all our Goods to feed the Poor, will be ſo far from obtaining a Reward, that our Text tells us, *it can profit us nothing.*

Laſtly, The Apoſtle here prefers the Grace of *Charity* before, and above *Martyrdom* it ſelf, in the next words, *And though I give my Body to be Burnt, and have not* Charity, *I am nothing.* This is the Higheſt outward Proof, or Demonſtration, that any can give of the Soundneſs and Sincerity of his Religion, to be content to Die for it, and ſacrifice his Life in the Cauſe and Defence of it. *Greater love than this hath no Man, than to lay down his Life for his Friend.* This is that fiery Trial of which St. *Peter* ſpeaks, to try the Truth and Conſtancy of our Faith, and the Reality of our Profeſſion. If it can endure the Teſt of the Flames, and ſtand the ſhock of the John 15. 13.

fierceſt Temptation, its a good ſign of its being true and genuine: But if it melts in the Furnace of Affliction, and in the Day of Temptation falls away, 'tis an Argument of a weak or unſound Faith; and of a hollow, rotten and empty Profeſſion.

The Apoſtle would not have Chriſtians *think it ſtrange concerning the fiery trial*, as if ſome new or ſtrange thing had happen'd unto them: for Afflictions and Perſecutions, are the common Lot and Portion of the Righteous here in this Life, and are ſent to try the Truth and Sincerity of their Graces; to make them conformable to their Saviour, who was made perfect by Suffering, that they may be Partakers of his Sufferings, and of the Joy and Glory that follow'd them. Neither may we think it a new or ſtrange thing to venture a ſhort miſerable and momentary Life here, for an eternal Life of Bliſs and Glory hereafter. For this was the way of the Saints and Martyrs before us, they went as our Saviour did, by the Croſs to a Crown, and all Suffer'd with, or for him, before they came to Reign with him in Glory. This is the fiery Trial which St. *Peter* wills us not to think a ſtrange and unheard-of thing, but to expect and pre-

1 Pet. 4. 12.

pare

pare for it, being deſign'd to try our Faith and Patience, as Metals are tried in the Fire; and therefore, we ſhould not be ſtartl'd at it, as a new unuſual thing, but to think of it, and look for it, as one of the extraordinary Methods of God's dealing with his People.

But yet it cannot but appear ſomewhat ſtrange, that any ſhould willingly embrace the Flames, and voluntarily give his Body to be Burnt, without any true Love to God, or his Ways, which yet our Text tells us, may be done without *Charity*; the Bond of Perfectneſs, and of all Vertue: For it ſuppoſes, that a Man may make himſelf a Burnt-offering, by giving his Body to be Burnt for Chriſt, and yet have no true *Charity*, and where it is ſo, he only falls a Sacrifice to his own Raſhneſs and Folly; for ſuch Burnt-offerings are ſo far from meriting a Reward, that they lead only to greater and everlaſting Burnings.

One would think it ſhould be a warm, flaming Zeal towards God, that ſhould prompt any to ſo high and noble an Act of *Martyrdom*, as to offer up himſelf as a living, or rather a dying Sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto him; and to give his own dearly Beloved Body to be Burnt

in his Service: and yet our Apoſtle here intimates, that this may be only an empty, tranſient Blaze, without any real Flame of Love or *Charity*, and ſo, ſoon vaniſhes into nothing.

Tho' Inſtances of this Kind are very rare; yet there have been found ſome, who have parted with their Lives, either thro' the Influence of a falſe Zeal, or thro' an Affectation of Bravery, to get themſelves a Name, or to be rid of the weariſom Toils and Troubles of this Life; yea, *Seneca* tells us, *Mori velle non tantum fortis & miſer, ſed & faſtidioſus poteſt*; that is, not only the Valiant and the Miſerable, but even the Nice and Delicate Perſon may even dare to Die, being tir'd with the tedious and irkſome Repetition of the ſame Things. Moreover, we read of ſome who Sacrific'd their Sons and Daughters (the deareſt Pledges of Themſelves) unto Devils: And of many others, who Sacrific'd Themſelves unto Idol-Gods. Yea, we read of one *Vaninus*, who gave his Body to be Burnt in the Defence of Atheiſm, and refus'd to own God, even in the Flames. Theſe, and the like Perſons, chooſing to Die from no good Principle of Love to God, their Neighbour, or

Them-

Themſelves, are rather Self-murderers than Martyrs; and being void of all true *Charity*, can have no Title to the Crown, or Reward of *Martyrdom*.

Thus we ſee the Excellency of this Grace above all the Gifts of the Spirit, which receive all their Luſtre and Uſe from it, and without it are of no avail. This is that *more Excellent Way*, ſhew'd us by the Apoſtle in the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, in which the excellent Ones of the Earth are ſaid to walk, in their Way to Heaven.

The Gifts of the Spirit are beſtow'd promiſcuouſly on the Good and Bad, and like the Influences of the Heavens, are felt and enjoy'd indifferently by all Men. The Gift of Tongues was a common Bleſſing, given both to the Wiſe and Unwiſe; and if not rightly us'd, will ſpeak more againſt, than for them that have it. *Balaam* in the Old Teſtament, and *Judas* in the New, had the Gift of Prophecying, as well as the other Prophets and Apoſtles, who yet were no better than Reprobates and Caſtaways. And they who with *Capernaum* were well nigh lifted up to Heaven in the Heighth of their Privileges, ſhall be caſt down the lower into Hell, for the Abuſe and

Miſ-improvement of them. So that Spiritual Gifts add no inward Worth, or Excellency to any Man's Perſon, nor can they of themſelves, merit or obtain any Reward; but if ill-manag'd, they only add to the Weight of our Tranſgreſſions, and ſink us into the deeper Condemnation.

Whereas the Graces of the Spirit are conferr'd only on the Saints that excel on the Earth; which if perſever'd in to the laſt, will make them ſhine the brighter for ever in Heaven.

In a Word, 'tis Grace that ſanctifies our Gifts, and advances them to Glory. Wherefore, ſince *Charity* is ſo highly preferr'd above all other Things, let us according to the Apoſtle's Advice, *Above all Things have fervent* Charity *among our ſelves, and walk in Love, as Chriſt alſo hath loved us.* 1 Pet. 4. 8.

Where we may obſerve, *Firſt*, with what particular Care and eſpecial Regard this divine Grace is recommended to us, *viz.* That we ſhould above and before all other Things pray and labour for it; and that, not in the lower Meaſures, but in the intenſe Degrees of it; for 'tis not barely, have *Charity*, but have *fervent Charity* among your ſelves; ſigni-

ſignifying, that our mutual Love to one another ſhould be ardent and ſincere, *not in Word and in Tongue only, but in Deed and in Truth.* And as our Mutual Love and *Charity* is to be pure and free from all mixture of Hypocriſy and Diſſimulation; Ro. 12. 9. ſo is it to be firm and conſtant, free from all failure and decay; and, like the Veſtal Flames, ſtill burning in our Breaſts; it muſt not be weaken'd by Time, nor ſlacken'd by any diſtance of Place, nor alter'd by any Circumſtance or Change of either; but muſt continue *ſtedfaſt and unmovable, always abounding* in the excellent Acts and Fruits of it; knowing, that *this our labour of Love will not be in vain in the Lord*; But will meet at laſt with a moſt ample Recompence of Reward. To Quicken us hereunto, the Apoſtle ſets before us the higheſt and nobleſt Pattern of *Charity* for our Imitation, willing us to *walk in Love as Chriſt alſo hath loved us*: that is, with the moſt undiſſembled, perfect and unchangable Love; being ever ready to do all good Offices for one another, as our bleſſed Saviour was for us all. And this will lead me to conſider the ſeveral Acts, Offices and Properties of *Charity*, mention'd in the following Verſes of this Chapter,

Chapter, to which I ſhall proceed in my next.

The

The PROPERTIES OF *CHARITY.* Of *Long-ſuffering.*

1 Cor. XIII. 4.
Charity ſuffereth long, &c.

THE Apoſtle having in the Three preceding Verſes, ſet forth the Excellency of *Charity*, and particularly how far it exceeds all other ſpiritual Gifts, which derive all their Uſefulneſs and Excellency from it; he proceeds in the Four following Verſes, to deſcribe the Nature of this Virtue, by ſeveral Acts and Properties of it, in theſe Words: *Charity ſuffereth long and is kind; Charity envieth not; Charity vaunteth not it ſelf, is not puffed up, does not behave it ſelf unſeemly,*

ſeemly, ſeeketh not her own, is not eaſily provok'd, thinketh no Evil, rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth: Beareth all Things, believeth all Things, hopeth all Things, endureth all Things.

Theſe are the principal Acts and Offices of *Charity*, which being of daily Uſe, and attended with great Benefit and Comfort, both to our Selves and Others, will deſerve to be particularly handled. Accordingly therefore I begin with the

Firſt of them, and that is *Long-ſuffering*, in theſe Words, *Charity ſuffereth long*: the word in the Original is μακροθυμεῖ, which ſignifies a Slowneſs to Wrath or Anger. And this is that Act of *Charity* that teaches us to govern our Paſſions, with reſpect to any Wrongs or Injuries that may be done us: in order to which it keeps Men,

Firſt, From a too quick Reſentment of any Affront or Unkindneſs, which the Wiſe-man ſtiles a *Haſtineſs of Spirit*, or too ſudden breaking into Paſſion; for
Prov. 14. 29. that, as *Solomon* tells us, *exalteth Folly*. There are ſome of ſuch fierce and haſty Spirits, that like Tinder, they catch Fire at every Spark, and are enflam'd upon any ſlight Occaſion; every little Treſpaſs or Miſcarriage moves their Spleen, and kindles their Rage; every ſlight In-

adver-

advertency, Failing or Miſtake ſtirs up Wrath; yea, every Accident or Misfortune, ſuch as the breaking of a Glaſs, or the loſing of a Trifle, ſhall ruffle and diſcompoſe them; ſo peeviſh and tender are ſome Men, that they are oftentimes uneaſy, both to themſelves and others.

Now *Charity* corrects this Niceneſs, and Haſtineſs of Spirit, and gives Men a greater Power and Command of themſelves, than to be ſo eaſily enflam'd; for our Apoſtle tells us, it *ſuffereth long*. It is not apt to pick Quarrels, or to fall into Rage, upon any trivial Occaſion, but overlooks the Infirmities, Indiſcretions and Inadvertencies of Mankind, it keeps the Paſſions in that due Decorum and Reſtraint, that they do not ſuddenly break out, or take Fire preſently, but as *Solomon* directs, it teaches Men to defer their Anger, and ſo by gaining Time, extinguiſhes and puts out the Flame.

This is that Long-ſuffering and Forbearance which we find ſo often recommended to us in Holy Scripture; St. *Paul* exhorts to it as the greateſt Ornament of our Chriſtian Profeſſion, where he wills Chriſtians to *walk worthy of the Vocation, wherewith they are called*, and then tells them how, namely, *with Lowlineſs and Meek-* Eph. 4. 1, 2.

Meekneſs, with Long-Suffering, forbearing one another in Love. In his Epiſtle to the *Galatians*, he reckons it among the Fruits of that bleſſed Spirit, by which we are to be guided and directed, but *the Fruit of the Spirit is Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs and Meekneſs.* All which are the Effects of that *Charity*, which we are here told *ſuffereth long.*

Now this Long-ſuffering or Forbearance implies ſuch a Strength and Firmneſs of Mind, as is able to withſtand the Impreſſions of Injuries, and ſo is oppos'd to that Weakneſs and Feebleneſs of Spirit, that ſoon flies into Paſſion and Impatience, and cannot bear the leaſt Air of Evil: This is a Diſeaſe of the Mind, that keeps it ſtill ſore and uneaſy, and too apt to be affected and overcome of Evil; and it hath been well obſerv'd, 'That as ſick Perſons are offended even 'with the Light of the Sun, and the 'Freſhneſs of the Air, which are plea-'ſant to Men in Health; even ſo Perſons 'of weak, and feeble Minds are eaſily 'offended, and what ſerves to try the 'Conſtancy of other Men, does but ſhake 'and trouble them.

Now *Charity*, which is the Health of the Soul, enables us to *ſuffer long*, and bear

bear up againſt theſe ſhort Injuries; and ſo it is the only cure for this Indiſpoſition.

Secondly, This Act of *Charity* in *ſuffering long*, not only preſerves Men from ſudden and haſty Paſſion, the common Infirmity of weak Minds: But more eſpecially checks all Thoughts of Revenge, the much greater Malady of envious and malicious Spirits: There are ſome, who if juſtly offended, think of nothing but Revenge, and breath out Slaughter and Deſtruction to all that ſtand in their Way: We find *David* himſelf in this fit of Impatience, who being mov'd at the ſurly Anſwer of *Nabal*, was preſently for the Murdering of him, and all his Family. The Servant in the Goſpel, to whom his Maſter had forgiven Ten Thouſand Talents, took his Fellow-Servant by the Throat, who ow'd him but an Hundred Pence, and would not ſtay an Hour for his Money, but caſt him into Priſon, and could not be appeas'd with all the Promiſes and Endeavours of a full Satisfaction: And 'tis but too frequent for Men of ill Minds, upon every ſlight Injury, to meditate, and ſtudy Revenge.

Now *Charity*, that *ſuffereth long*, teaches us not to be ſo haſty to return or revenge an Evil, but to wait with Patience; to forget

forget little Wrongs, and be ſlow to demand Satisfaction for greater; the charitable Perſon will ſtay a while, and paſs by ſome leſſer Affronts and Treſpaſſes, for which the angry and furious Man would ſtreight require Reparation; he will not ſtand with his Debtors for a Day, or take all the Forfeitures which the Rigor of the Law might give him; much leſs will he lie at the catch, and take all advantages, either to over-reach or undermine them. He will not preſently break Friendſhip for the firſt Unkindneſs, but will ſtay a while, and ſeek to overcome Evil with Good, being ever willing to hearken to any fair Terms of Accommodation, and ready to accept of the leaſt Submiſſion and Acknowledgment. This is no more than what natural Affection ſuggeſts to us, towards them whom we entirely love, being always willing to overlook their Miſcarriages, waiting patiently for their Amendment, and gladly embracing any thing that may unite and cement our Friendſhip; moreover, this is what is frequently inculcated upon us in Holy Scripture, where nothing is more ſtrictly forbidden us, than the matter of Revenge; *Recompence to no Man* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *Evil for Evil.*

Rom. 12. 17.

Evil. Dearly beloved, avenge not your ſelves, but rather give place unto Wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay ſaith the Lord. For us to avenge our ſelves is to uſurp upon God's Authority, and to take his work out of his Hands; for he claims Vengeance as his, and therefore we are to leave it to him, who will be ſure to repay in his time and way. Rom. 12. 19.

And as we are forbid to meddle with Revenge, or to think of returning Evil for Evil, ſo have we many Precepts to Forgiveneſs; St. *Paul* exhorts the *Epheſians, to be tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Chriſt's Sake had forgiven them* And to the ſame Purpoſe he wills the *Coloſſians, to put on Bowels of Mercy, Meekneſs and Long-ſuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any Man have a Quarrel againſt any, even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo do ye.* Where the Apoſtle wills us to be more ready to forgive, than to revenge an Injury; which is a noble Act of that *Charity* which ſuffereth long. Eph. 4. 32. Col. 3. 13.

Obj. But will not this make us a Butt for every one to ſhoot at? muſt we put up all the Wrongs and Treſpaſſes that are done to us, will not this encourage Evil Men to multiply their Injuries? and does

Charity require us to bear all this without seeking a Remedy or Reparation?

No, not so neither, for tho' *Charity* suffereth long, yet it doth not require us to suffer always; if Patience, instead of overcoming, does but encrease and multiply Evil, if Men are thereby emboldened from lesser Trespasses to commit greater; *Charity*, which is ever to begin at home, allows and directs us to seek redress, not only to repair former, but to prevent future Wrongs. We read that God Almighty's Long-suffering and Forbearance hath sometimes an end, when Sinners, instead of being thereby won to Repentance, are only harden'd in their Impieties, his abus'd Favour turns to Fury, and his former Acts of Mercy serve but to inflame his Wrath, and heighten the Severity of his Justice: in like manner, if Men by Forbearance do not cease, but add to their Injuries; if instead of being melted into Kindness and Amendment, they are only harden'd and excited to farther Wrongs and Injustice, they justly forfeit all Title to *Charity*, which in such Cases is much better exercis'd in the Punishment, than the Pardon of them: only this Act of *Charity* that suffers-long, wills us to observe the following Rules. *First*,

First, That we be not ſuddenly inflam'd by any ſlight, involuntary Miſcarriage, nor mov'd to the Reparation of every petty, inconſiderable Damage; there are ſome things that are apt to diſpleaſe, without doing any great harm, theſe are to be overlook'd as the common Infirmities of human Nature: of this kind are ſome Mens haſtineſs of Speech, teſtineſs of Humour, frowardneſs of Mind, ſtiffneſs and incompliance in ſmall Matters, and the like; theſe, tho' apt to diſtaſt cholerick and fiery Spirits, are to be paſt by as the Follies and Frailties of Mankind. Again,

There are other things that may do ſome ſmall harm, but are altogether involuntary, and beſide the Intentions; ſuch are ſmall accidental Loſſes, involuntary Treſpaſſes, and the like; theſe too *Charity*, which ſuffers-long, and forgives much, will make us ready to overlook, and not ſpur us on to redreſs trifling and inconſiderable Damages.

Secondly, Where the Damage is greater and more voluntary, yet there we muſt not right our ſelves by any private Revenge, or go about to redreſs our Injuries with our own Hands; for, *Vengeance is mine* (ſaith God) *I will repay*. We

may not retaliate the Injury our ſelves, or carve out our own Satisfaction; but muſt leave it to him to whom Vengeance belongeth, who will either do it by himſelf, or by his publick Officers, whom he hath *appointed to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil.* And therefore,

Thirdly, In all ſuch weighty Caſes we are to ſeek the Redreſs of Injuries in a legal Way, that is, at the Hands of publick Magiſtrates, who *are God's Miniſters attending continually on this very thing*; to this end God hath put the Sword of Juſtice into their Hands, requiring them not *to bear it in vain, but to uſe it to the Terror of Evil-doers, and to the Praiſe of them that do well.*

Laſtly, Even in this legal Way of purſuing Right, and redreſſing Wrong, we are to take care to preſerve that Love that becometh Chriſtians; not ſeeking the puniſhing of others to gratify a revengeful Humour, but merely to right our ſelves; not uſing any indirect Arts to pervert Juſtice, nor carrying the matter higher, than a juſt Reparation of the Damages will amount to. In a Word, nothing is to be done thro' Striſe or Envying, to moleſt or diſquiet any other, but merely to preſerve the Peace and Welfare of Mankind. This,

This, *Charity*, both to our ſelves and others, exacts from us; which as it is loth to be brought to theſe Extremities, ſo it is unwilling to do any harſh or rigid thing in them, and will rather ſuffer Evil himſelf than do it to another.

Thus I have explain'd the firſt Act of *Charity*, which is Long-ſuffering, *Charity ſuffereth long*: having ſhew'd how long we are to bear with the Affronts and Injuries of others, and likewiſe how we muſt demean our ſelves in redreſſing them, when we are to bear them no longer.

Now to encourage us to the Practice hereof, we may conſider,

Firſt, How long God Almighty is pleas'd to bear with us, how ſlow he is to Wrath, and how ready to Forgive; we find the Apoſtle frequently propounding the Example of God's Long-ſuffering, to enable us to bear with the Infirmities of our Brethren, willing us to *forbear and forgive one another, as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven us.*

He is of great Long-ſuffering and Patience, *and God is provoked every day*; The beſt of us daily offend our Maker, and tho' he is ſtill heaping his Mercies

and Bleſſings upon us, yet are we ſtill heaping our Sins and Provocations upon him; and yet he doth not preſently cut us off, but bears with us, and waits for our Amendment; and if God thus pities and forbears us, we ought alſo to forbear one another; for our Saviour hath made our forgiving others Treſpaſſes, the Motive and Condition of our asking the Forgiveneſs of our own; and hath expreſly declar'd, that *if we forgive not other Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will our Heavenly Father forgive ours.*

Mat. 6. 15.

We know how it Far'd with him, who took his Fellow-ſervant by the Throat for a Hundred Pence, when his Maſter had juſt before forgiven him Ten Thouſand Talents; His Maſter *was wroth, and deliver'd him to the Tormentors, till he ſhould pay the utmoſt Farthing: So likewiſe* (ſaith our Saviour) *will my Heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his Brother his Treſpaſſes.* Moreover, *Secondly*, 'tis a greater Honour to remit an Offence, than 'tis to revenge it; for in taking Revenge a Man is but even with his Enemy, but in Pardoning it he is above him; for 'tis a Prince's part to Pardon; 'tis mean and baſe to be *overcome of Evil*, but 'tis a noble Victory

Mat. 18. 34.

to

to *overcome Evil with Good*: yea, this makes us like unto God, and entitles us to his Mercy and Pardon, whereas Revenge deprives us of both; and therefore *Solomon* truly ſaid, *That 'tis the glory of a Man to paſs by an Offence.* Again,

Thirdly, There is a greater Pleaſure in Pardoning, than in Returning an Injury; for the one ſits eaſy, the other grates upon the Mind; Revenge, how ſweet ſoever it may ſeem to cholerick and malicious Spirits, does commonly prove ſour, and bitter too in the end; 'tis attended with great Diſquiet and Perplexity of Mind, and brings on unſpeakable Miſeries, both in this World, and the Next; whereas paſſing by of Offences, is accompanied with great Calmneſs and Serenity here, and leads to eternal Peace and Tranquility hereafter.

To conclude then, Let us learn and practice this Piece of Chriſtian *Charity*, to Suffer-long, not to be eaſily moved at the Follies, Overſights and Indiſcretions of Mankind; but to bear with the Failings and Infirmities of one another, forgiving our Brother his Treſpaſſes, as we expect that God for Chriſt's Sake will forgive Ours.

This Condition our Saviour himself hath annex'd to our Petition for Pardon, that God would *forgive our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that Treſpaſs againſt us.* This is frequently inculcated upon us in holy Scripture; *forgive, and ye ſhall be forgiven,* but *if ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive yours*; where we are taught to offer up our Prayers with Hearts empty of all Malice, or Thoughts of Revenge, and full of *Charity* and Readineſs to forgive others; for God expects that we ſhould be ſo diſpoſed towards our Brethren, as we deſire him to be towards us, which is no more than what the Golden Rule of Equity, of *Doing as we would be Done by*, requires of us: And therefore we are bid to be *Reconcil'd to our Brother, before we offer our Gift upon the Altar* for Reconciliation with God. That all Grudges and Prejudices being remov'd, we may lift up *holy hands without Wrath and Doubting*; 'tis upon theſe Terms that we implore the Long-Suffering and Forbearance of God, that we ſuffer long and bear with the Failings of our Brethren; without which, we do in effect Pray againſt our ſelves, and forfeit all Title to his Favour and Forgiveneſs;

Matth. 6. 12.

Luke. 6. 37.

Matth. 5.

1 Tim. 2. 8.

neſs: for He himſelf hath told us, that *they ſhall have Judgment without Mercy, who ſhew no Mercy.* But who ſo, ſhall imitate the Long-ſuffering and Forbearance of God; who is provok'd by us every day; he ſhall find and feel the Loving-kindneſs of the Lord. Wherefore let us bear awhile with the Failings and Frailties of Mankind; knowing, that *if we Suffer with Chriſt, we ſhall alſo Reign with him:* And if we ſuffer long here, we ſhall e're long be put in a Condition free from all Sufferings, and full of unmixt and uninterrupted Joys for evermore. Jam. 2. 13. Rom. 8. 17.

To which God of his Mercy bring us, for the alone Merits of Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

H

The

The PROPERTIES OF *CHARITY.* Of *Loving-Kindneſs.*

1 Cor. XIII. 4. *Charity is Kind,* &c.

HAving explain'd the firſt Act of *Charity*, (*viz.*) *Long-ſuffering*, from the foregoing Words, *Charity ſuffereth-long*. I proceed now to the Second Branch of it, which is Brotherly-Kindneſs, in theſe Words, *Charity is Kind*; The difference between thoſe two is chiefly this:

The former helps us to bear and ſuffer Evil; the latter teaches us to wiſh and to do Good: The one is that paſſive Part of *Charity*, that paſſeth by and forgives Wrongs;

Wrongs; the other is that active Part of it, that prompts to all the Offices of Right and Kindneſs: In ſhort, this not only reſtrains us from rendring Evil for Evil, but inclines us to return Good for Evil, and, in the Apoſtle's Phraſe, to *overcome Evil with Good.* So that this is a higher Act and Advance of *Charity*, that adds to Patience, Virtue, and to Long-ſuffering, *Loving-Kindneſs.* In treating therefore hereof I muſt,

Firſt ſhew, What this Kindneſs is, together with the Acts and Offices of it.

Secondly, To whom it is to be ſhew'd, and how far to extend: And,

Laſtly, Preſs it upon the Practice of all Chriſtians.

Firſt then, What is this Kindneſs here recommended by the Apoſtle?

The Word in the Original is χρηστότης, which ſignifies Gentleneſs and Benignity of Spirit, and may be deſcrib'd to be that Act of *Charity*, that diſpoſes Men to wiſh and do well to one another; ſo that we may obſerve in it a double Act: The one of Benevolence, which conſiſts in wiſhing well; the other of Beneficence, which conſiſts in doing well. The former reſpects the inward, the latter, the outward Man. Benevolence, or Good-will,

is

is that Act of Kindneſs, that conſiſts in wiſhing well to any Man, and heartily deſiring his Welfare; and this will be attended with hearty Prayers unto God in his Behalf, recommending him to his Grace and Favour, and imploring his Bleſſing in all his Affairs: This is ſuch a Piece of Brotherly-Kindneſs, that *Charity* requires in all Chriſtians. And 'tis a manifeſt Sign of Irreligion and Ill-will where 'tis wanting; *God forbid* (ſaith *Samuel* to the *Iſraelites*) *that I ſhould ſin againſt the Lord in ceaſing to pray for you.* As if it were a great Offence againſt God, as well as a great Unkindneſs to our Neighbour, to deny him the Benefit of our Prayers. Again,

1 Sam. 12. 23.

This Benevolence or Good-Will is accompanied with an inward Senſe and Sympathy with each others Condition, by which we bear a Part in the Joys and Sorrows of one another. This Act of Kindneſs the Apoſtle exhorts to *Rom.* 12. 15. *Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep.* That is, be affected with one another's Condition, partaking of the Good or Evil that befall them, whereby we ſhall encreaſe the Joys, and leſſen the Sorrows of one another. This the Apoſtle elſewhere ſtiles,

the

the *bearing one another's Burden*; *Bear ye one another's Burden, and ſo fulfil the Law of Chriſt.* This is a Burden that Chriſt himſelf hath laid upon us, having born the Burden of his Father's Wrath for us, and thereby made his Yoke eaſy, and his Burden light: yea the Law of Nature, as well as the Law of Chriſt, requires this of us; meaning, that we as Members of the ſame Body, ſhould ſympathize with one another in Affliction, as well as Proſperity, and bear our Brethren's Burden with a compaſſionate Heart, and a helping Hand; which to do is to fulfil the Law of Chriſt, who hath made Love the Sum and Subſtance of all his Commandments, ſtil'd therefore by the Apoſtle *the Bond of Perfectneſs*, that holds all the Parts together, and compleats the Character of a good Chriſtian. Gal. 6. 2.

The truth is (as one hath well obſerv'd) to be fram'd to this Affection is one of the nobleſt Priviledges we have above the Brute Beaſts, for thoſe are made for Selfiſhneſs, and can neither know nor feel what their Fellows ſuffer: The Author of Nature hath indeed, for the Preſervation of the kind, implanted in the Old Ones a Care and Kindneſs of the Young, but this is only a natural Impulſe,

of

of which they neither underſtand the Reaſon, nor hath it any long Continuance; for as ſoon as the Young Ones can ſhift for themſelves, there is no Appearance of any Compaſſion in the Old Ones after, whatſoever occaſion there may be for it.

To Man only of all Creatures under Heaven, hath God given this Quality, to be affected with the Griefs or Joys of thoſe of his own kind, to feel the Evils that others feel, that he may ſympathize and bear a Share with them; Thus to do is to *be kindly affectioned one to another with Brotherly Love,* and *to love without Diſſimulation*; which are the internal Acts of that Kindneſs, that belong to this Branch of *Charity*: Oppoſite to this, is that evil and unnatural Diſpoſition, that makes Men wiſh ill to their Neighbour, ſecretly deſiring his Ruin, and rejoicing at all the Misfortunes that oppreſs him, of which Sort the World affords but too many.

Rom. 12. 9, 10.

But beſide theſe internal Acts of Benevolence and Good-Wills, there are likewiſe the external Acts of Beneficence and Well-doing, that appertain to this Virtue, for 'tis not enough to wiſh well without doing it, nor is it ſufficient to do no harm. but *Charity* obliges us to be doing good:

good: The Truth is, hearty and ſincere Wiſhes will draw Endeavours after them, and he that truly deſires another's Welfare, will not decline the Means of promoting it.

Now there are many good Offices of this Stamp, which Brotherly-kindneſs will prompt us to; as, to inſtruct the Ignorant, to relieve the Oppreſſed, to unloſe heavy Burdens, to ſee that thoſe that are in Need and Neceſſity have Right; Theſe are all Acts of Humanity as well as Charity, which we all owe, and muſt pay to one-another: for *Charity is kind*, and is ever ready to give Advice in caſe of Doubts, Help in caſe of Difficulties, Succour and Relief in caſe of Diſtreſs; in a word, 'tis never backward to aſſiſt and comfort in all the needful times of Trouble.

Oppoſite to this are all the Acts of Oppreſſion, Cruelty and Injuſtice, which are too frequent and rife in the World.

Laſtly, Kindneſs here implies Gentleneſs and Courteſy of Behaviour, whereby Men become friendly and willing to oblige; *Charity* ſweetens Men's Spirits, and makes them affable and eaſie to be treated with, it takes off the Ruggedneſs and Uneaſineſs of their Natures, and renders

renders them converſable, ſmooth, and as far as innocently they may, Complaiſant toward Mankind: Where this excellent Virtue dwells, it receives all Perſons with Civility and Reſpect, paying to every one the Honour that is due to their Place and Function, and is free, candid and ingenuous in all its Deportment; it gives all the Allowances it can, ſhews all decent Compliance and Condeſcenſion, and renders Converſation not only eaſy, but one of the greateſt Bleſſings and Comforts of human Life: To this therefore we find many Precepts and Exhortations in holy Scripture, St. *Paul* wills us, to *be kindly affectioned one towards another*; and to that end, *not to mind high things, but to condeſcend to Men of low eſtate*: And St. *Peter*, *to love as brethren, to be pitiful and courteous*; that is, to treat thoſe we converſe with, with kind Looks, obliging Carriage, and endearing Language, being benign, bountiful and compaſſionate, as occaſion ſhall require; this will diſpoſe us for Society here, and prepare us for the bleſſed Society of Saints and Angels hereafter.

Rom. 12.

1 Pet. 3. 8.

Oppoſite to this is that roughneſs, and ſourneſs of Temper, that is to be found in ſome Men, whereby they become churliſh

churliſh, like *Nabal*, and unfit to be ſpoken to; or like the *Phariſees* ſullen, moroſe and unconverſable.

But this will fall more properly under that Branch of *Charity*, which teaches us not to *behave our ſelves unſeemly*, where it ſhall be more largely conſider'd.

In a word, the Kindneſs here aſcrib'd to *Charity*, conſiſts in *loving our Neighbour as our ſelves, and doing to others, as we would be done unto:* For thereby making others Condition our own, we become affected towards them as we ought; We know how we our ſelves are affected with Pain, and Poverty, Hunger and Thirſt, Fear and Grief, and with all the Sufferings of human Life: And we know by that how others are, and muſt be affected with them; this will beget in us Compaſſion and Fellow-feeling, and that will diſpoſe to all Acts of Mercy and Beneficence, making us to ſympathize in the Wants and Sickneſs, and to rejoyce in the Health and Proſperity of one another.

Thus having ſeen ſomething of that Kindneſs, which is here made an Ingredient of *Charity*: I proceed,

Secondly, To conſider the Subject to whom this Kindneſs is to be ſhewn, and

how far it is to extend; And that the Gal.6.10. Apoſtle tells us, is *to all Men*; *As we have opportunity let us do good unto all Men*; None are to be excluded from the Offices of our *Charity*, no not our very Enemies; for our Saviour hath commanded us, to Mat. 5. 44, &c. *love our Enemies, to do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that deſpitefully uſe us and perſecute us*; and there is good reaſon for it, for all Men have the ſame common Nature with our ſelves, which we are ſo far to reſpect in the meaneſt, as to pay it all the good Offices that are due to it; this the virtue of Humanity exacts from us, to love thoſe of our own Kind, and to honour the Nature we partake of; Nay, the worſe any are, the greater need have they of ſome Offices of our *Charity*, as to adviſe, direct, reprove, and pray for them, as occaſion ſhall require, which Acts of Kindneſs muſt not be omitted to our greateſt Enemies: We read of ſome who confine all the Offices of *Charity*, to thoſe of their own Party, and will ſcarce perform the common Acts of Humanity to any but their own Sect.

The Samaritans would not ſhew the Way to a Jew, or receive him into their Houſes in the greateſt Exigence. The Phariſees

Phariſees would ſalute none but their own Brethren, nor do good to any but ſuch as did good to them; and we have too many ſtill, who pretend to be better Chriſtians than other Men, and yet reſtrain all their Acts of Kindneſs within the ſtrait limits of their own Sect; This is a narrow contracted *Charity*, which our Saviour condemn'd in the Phariſees, as an inſtance of Hypocriſy, and not a badge of true Religion; for this contracts the Bowels, and deſtroys that univerſal Love and Good-will, that we owe to Mankind: whereas Chriſtianity enlarges the Heart, and teaches us *as we have opportunity, to do good unto all Men.* To this end,

Our bleſſed Saviour propounds to us the Example of God Almighty, who is kind to the juſt and unjuſt, cauſing the Sun to ſhine, and the Rain to fall promiſcuouſly on both; willing us to imitate the Patern of his Goodneſs, and to *be merciful, as our Heavenly Father is merciful.*

But, are we to be alike kind to all Men? does *Charity* allow no Diſtinction? And may we not prefer ſome before others in the Offices of Kindneſs? Yes, we are to provide firſt for thoſe of our own Houſe and Family, for *he that provides not for*

1 Tim. 5 8. *his own, especially those of his own Blood and Family, hath denied the Faith and is worse than an Infidel*, who ordinarily take care of their Parents, and make Provision for their poor Relations; so that we may prefer Kindred and Relations before Strangers, Country-men before Foreigners, Friends before Foes, Good Men before Bad; where other Things are equal, the Tyes of Blood, Friendship and Religion may and ought to turn the Gal. 6. 1. Scale; when the Apostle bids us *to do good to all Men*, he more especially minds us, of the *Houshold of Faith*; And St. *Peter* wills us, as to *honour all Men*, and to pay Respect to our Nature in the meanest Person; so more especially to *Love the Brother-hood*, that is, those that are adopted into Christ's Family, and demean themselves as the Children of the most high, for these being better and more in the esteem of God, than others, are to be so in ours; and claim a greater Share in our Affection and Kindness: Besides by so doing, we give Encouragement to Virtue, when besides the Civility due to our Nature, we add something over, upon the Score of Piety and Goodness; but still our Kindness must not be confin'd to these, but as we have Opportunity

tunity and Ability we are to do good to all Men, for hereby ſhall ye know that ye are my Diſciples (ſaith our Saviour) if ye Love one another; indeed, Nature it ſelf inclines to Humanity, and 'tis nothing but the Corruption of Nature and bad Principles, that give it any other Biaſs; for where 'tis renew'd or improv'd by good Principles, there it grows into generous Inclinations, and the more it encreaſes in Wiſdom and Virtue, the more 'tis addicted to Compaſſion and Kindneſs.

Thus we ſee the ſecond Branch of *Charity*, which is Brotherly-Kindneſs: haveing ſhewn ſome of the principal Acts and Offices of it, together with the Subject to whom they are to be paid, *Charity is kind* and loving to all Men.

It remains then, that we henceforth learn and practiſe this univerſal Love and Kindneſs to Mankind; wiſhing-well and according to the Ability and Opportunity that God gives us, doing good to all Men. To encourage us hereunto, Know,

Firſt, That nothing makes us more like unto God, and more endears us to him, than Acts of Kindneſs and Beneficence; Mercy is that Attribute of his,

in which he is chiefly delighted: The Acts of Justice are in Scripture styl'd his *strange Acts*, which he is backward to, and nothing but the Clamor and Importunity of Mens Crimes, can draw them from him; but the Acts of his Mercy are infinitely Free and Voluntary, and when we shew Kindness to others, we imitate him in his most darling Perfection; *to do good and to communicate* (saith the Eph. 4. 1. Apostle) *forget not, for with such Sacrifices God is well pleas'd.* Mercy is likewise the best Jewel in the Diadem of Princes, and far outshines all their other Glories; 'tis the highest Ornament and Perfection of human Nature, that renders it in some measure God-like and Divine; hence the Apostle exhorts us to *be Followers of God as dear Children, and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us*: Our blessed Saviour hath left us a noble Patern of this Virtue, for he went up and down doing good both to the Souls and Bodies of Men, and sought all Opportunities of bettering and befriending Mankind; yea, he did good to those that had no Thoughts of Good, either to themselves or others, and extended the highest Acts of Love to his greatest Enemies. Again,

Secondly

Secondly, Kindneſs is the beſt way to beget Kindneſs; it draws to us the Kindneſs of our Maker, who is delighted with ſuch Sacrifices, it draws the Love of others, who are thereby oblig'd to Returns of Love and Kindneſs; it overcomes the Ill-will and Malice of our Enemies, and melts them into Tenderneſs and Compaſſion; and therefore the Apoſtle's Direction is, *if thy Enemy hunger feed him, if he thirſt give him drink, for thereby thou ſhalt heap Coals of Fire upon his Head.* The wiſe Man tells us, that *if a Man's ways pleaſe the Lord,* (as no ways are more pleaſing to him than *Charity* and Well-doing) *he maketh his very Enemies to be at Peace with him.* There are ſuch Charms in Goodneſs, as over-power and attract the Heart, and procure to us the Favour, both of God and Man. Rom. 12. 20. Prov. 16. 7.

Moreover, *Thirdly*, God hath plac'd Mankind in a mutual Need and Dependance on each other, meerly that they ſhould be kind and helpful to each other; ſo that as in the natural Body, one Member cannot ſay to another, I have no need of thee, being all made for the Succour of one another, and the Support of the whole: So in the Politick Bodies of States and Kingdoms, no one Member can ſub-

ſiſt without another, but they all ſtand in mutual Need, that they may afford mutual Aſſiſtances to each other for the good of the whole. Yea,

Fourthly, This was the great End and Deſign of thoſe ſeveral Kinds of Bleſſings and Advantages that God hath given to Mankind; namely, That they ſhould uſe them for the Good and Benefit of one another: Nothing is more evident, than that God hath ſcatter'd his Gifts, in various Meaſures and Proportions, on the Sons of Men; ſome being truſted with more, and ſome with fewer Talents; but the end of all of 'em is, our doing good in the World; they were not given for our ſelves only, but to be employ'd for the common Good and Intereſt of others; and he that hath paſt his Time in the World without doing any Good, hath been an unprofitable Burden of the Earth, and liv'd to no Purpoſe. Furthermore,

There is a Pleaſure in well-doing that far exceeds the Guſts or Reliſh of any ſenſual Pleaſures or Delights. The good Man finds and feels greater Satisfaction from the Acts of Kindneſs and *Charity*, than any Epicure or voluptuous Perſon ever did from the greateſt Luxuries.

And as there is Peace and Joy in it now, ſo is there a much greater Reward reſerv'd for it hereafter; when our reckoning comes to be caſt up in the Ends of our Lives, there will be no Conſideration at all had of any worldly Concerns, but the Remembrance of the Good we have done will be ſweet and pleaſant, and the Reward of it, will continue for ever. In a Word, To conclude this Branch of *Charity*, let us remember, that we have all one common Nature, to which we all owe a Kindneſs.

That we have one common Father in Heaven, from whom we receive it.

That we are deſcended from the ſame Earthly Parents, *Adam* and *Eve*, from whom we derive it.

That we all belong to the ſame myſtical Body of Chriſt, who by aſſuming our Nature, hath highly honour'd and advanc'd it.

Laſtly, That we have the ſame Hope of having it glorified together, all which ſhould encourage us to love as Brethren, to be kind, compaſſionate and courteous, that ſo by cheriſhing of Peace and Goodwill here on Earth, we may be fit to be tranſlated to the bleſſed Society of Saints and Angels in Heaven.

The

The PROPERTIES OF *CHARITY*: It *Envieth not.*

1 Cor. XIII. 4. *Charity Envieth not*, &c.

I Diſcours'd the laſt time of the ſecond Act or Property of *Charity*, and ſhew'd what that Kindneſs is that appertains to it. I muſt therefore proceed to the Third Branch of this Virtue, which is a Freedom from Envy and Emulation, contain'd in theſe Words, *Charity envieth not.* The Word in the original is ζηλοῖ, which is often taken in a good Senſe, *viz.* for a pious and well order'd Zeal, employ'd about the Glory of God, and the Good of his Church and People;

People; in this Senſe 'tis tranſlated to be *zealouſly affected*, and is highly recommended by our Apoſtle to all Chriſtians; *It is good*, ζηλοῦσθαι, *to be zealouſly affected always in a good Thing.* Gal. 4. 8. And elſewhere, we read of a holy Emulation, which is a ſtriving to out-do one another in Love, and in good Works. Now *Charity* is ſo far from excluding this kind of Zeal, that 'tis a main Act and Ingredient of it, and we find it mention'd by the Apoſtle as a Commendation of the *Corinthian's Charity*, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. *Yea, what Zeal it wrought in you*; which being compounded of Love and Anger, ſignifies their vehement Deſire to Vertue and Goodneſs, and likewiſe their great Hatred and Indignation againſt all Sin and Wickedneſs.

But beſides this, there is another Sort of Zeal, which is ſometimes taken for the black Paſſions of Envy, Hatred, and Emulation; St. *James* calls it πικρὸν ζῆλος, *a bitter Zeal*, which we tranſlate bitter Envyings, *Jam.* 3. 14. and St. *Paul* reckons ζῆλοι, which is render'd Emulations among the Works of the Fleſh, *Gal.* 5. 20. by which we are to underſtand, thoſe inordinate Deſires of the Soul, that carry it out in a too eager Purſuit of the Honours and Profits of this

this World; especially, as to that Part, or Portion of both, that belongs to any others; and in this Sense it is, that 'tis affirm'd of *Charity*, ἡ ζηλοῖ, *it envieth not.* And therefore in treating of it, I must,

First, Describe the Nature of *Envy*, and shew what it is.

Secondly, I must represent the Evil and Malignity of it. And,

Thirdly, Shew *Charity* to be the best, if not the only Preservative against it.

For the *First*, *Envy* is such a Sickness and Uneasiness of Mind, as makes Men grin and repine at another's Prosperity: I call it a Disease of the Mind, because 'tis principally seated within; and betokens an inward Grief, Trouble or Commotion of the Soul against another: And because, *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*, it frequently discovers it self in muttering and murmuring Speeches against them; and both these upon the account of some Good or Prosperity that hath betided them; thus, if one Man hath a greater Trade, and Thrive better than another, if he hath gain'd a better Reputation, or arriv'd to greater Dignity and Preferment, he commonly becomes the Object of Envy;

it galls and frets ſome Men to ſee others get above them; and inſtead of rejoycing, only repine and grudge at their Proſperity: And this is attended ſometimes, not only with Wiſhes, but Deſigns and Endeavours of undermining them; ſeeking to blaſt their Credit, by Whiſpers and Defamation; traducing their Actions, and throwing them down from the Pinacle of Honour, to which they are advanc'd: And ſo 'tis oppoſite to that Love and Kindneſs, which inclines Men to deſire and endeavour, the Good and Welfare of our Neighbour.

That this is the Nature of *Envy*, Inſtances in holy Scripture, as well as daily Experience, may inform us: *Cain* Envy'd his Brother *Abel*, becauſe his Sacrifice was better accepted than his own; *Gen.* 4. 4, 5. The *Philiſtines* Envy'd *Iſaac*, becauſe of his Poſſeſſions, *Gen.* 26. 14. *Rachel's* Barrenneſs, made her envy her Siſter's Fruitfulneſs, *Gen.* 30. 1. *Joſeph's* Brethren hated him the more, becauſe his Father loved him; yea, the bare Hopes and Proſpect of his Proſperity was grievous to them, as we read *Gen.* 37. 4. 11. This Diſtemper is ſtill too much found, and felt too, in the World, to need any Proof; and 'tis a much better

ter Task to endeavour to amend, than aggravate it.

Now the good Things of others, upon which *Envy* is wont to faſten, are either Spiritual or Temporal: Of the firſt ſort, are the Gifts of the Mind; of the other, the Gifts of Fortune; both which are frequently made the Objects of *Envy*: ſome Men cannot endure that others ſhould be thought Wiſer or Better than they, and therefore will embrace all Occaſions of leſſening and diſparageing their Abilities; as thinking all that is ſpoken in Commendation of others, to be a Detracting from them: Others are ſick and griev'd at the Advancement of ſuch as they do not like, aſcribing all their Perferment, rather to Favour and Fortune, than any Merit or Deſert of their own. Thus does *Envy*, like the Spider, ſuck Poiſon out of the ſweeteſt Flowers; and make that, which ſhould be the Object of Joy, become the occaſion of Sadneſs and Diſcontent.

The Perſons in whom this Evil is found, are commonly ſuch, in whom Pride, Ambition, and Covetouſneſs reign; for he that hath high Thoughts of himſelf, cannot eaſily ſee another mount above him; and ſuch as too eagerly purſue the World,

World, will endeavour to ſtop thoſe that ſeek to get before them: Another Man's Greatneſs muſt be an Eye-ſore to him who judges it due to his own Merit; neither can he well bear the miſſing of ſuch a Place or Preferment, which he thinks ought to have fallen to his Lot.

There is indeed a natural Pride in moſt Men, that diſpoſes them to *Envy*; for being too apt to overvalue their own Excellencies, they take others to ſtand in their way; and look upon another's Glory only as the darkening and eclypſing of theirs, and this naturally leads to Envy.

Again, Nice and feeble Minds are very ſubject to this Evil, the Weakneſs of their Reaſon gives Strength to their Paſſions, and that makes them eaſily offended; ſo that as Light is offenſive to a ſore Eye, ſo is another's Proſperity, grievous to an evil one.

This is briefly the Nature of *Envy*; namely, a Grief of Mind at another's Welfare. From whence I proceed,

Secondly, To repreſent the Evil and Malignity of it; and this will be apparent, by conſidering it as an Act of great Injuſtice againſt God, our Neighbour, and our Selves.

Firſt,

First, I say, *Envy* is a high Piece of Injustice against God, for it denies him the disposal of his own Blessings, and calls in question the Dispensations of divine Providence; the envious Man would fain engross both the Benefits of Heaven and Earth, and would not have any bestow'd on others, without his Leave and Approbation; he would have no Prayers heard, but his own; nor none favour'd, but whom he hath a mind to; he is disturb'd at all the Blessings that happen to others, and would have none fall beside Himself, and a few Friends of his, as if God was oblig'd to consult him in the Disposal of his Bounty, and to shew it only where, and to whom he thinks fit: Now this is not only Injustice, but a high Indignity and Affront offer'd to our Maker, to grumble at his Bounty, and take Pet at his dealing out, or disposing of his own Blessings: *Is it not lawful for me* (saith he, in the Parable) *to do what I will with my own? is thine Eye evil because mine is Good?* hath not God a Right to dispose of his own, or must he ask our Leave to whom he shall give it? and what greater Piece of Arrogance and Presumption can there be, than thus to prescribe to our Maker, and quar-

quarrel with the Acts and Methods of his Providence? Moreover,

Secondly, Envy is a great Piece of Injustice to our Neighbour; for it grudges him those Blessings, which God hath given him; and would rob him of that, to which he hath a just, and undoubted Title: Envy is in Scripture stil'd, an *evil Eye*, that sends forth such Darts, as either wound the Person, or blast the Comforts of our Neighbour; even as the bad Influences of the Stars are call'd *evil Aspects*, from the evil Effects that follow them. And a Great Man hath observ'd, that this Evil Eye does them most harm, when it beholds another in his Glory and Triumph; for that sets an Edge upon *Envy*, and makes it pierce deeper; besides, that at such times, the Spirits of the Envy'd Party do come forth most in the outward Parts, and so meet the Blow. Yea,

There is such a Malignity in *Envy*, that it frequently endangers the Life, and draws on the Murder of another; thus *Cain* out of Envy slew his Brother *Abel*, Gen. 4. *Ahab's* Envying of *Naboth's* Vineyard, occasion'd the taking away of his Life, 1 *Kings* 21. *Joseph's* Brethren out of *Envy*, sold him to the *Midianites*; and, tho' God Almighty turn'd it to his

greater Advancement, yet they intended nothing but Ruin and Deſtruction, *Gen.* 37. *Saul* Envying *David*'s Victory over the *Philiſtines*, is ſaid to look upon him with an evil Eye; and that an evil Spirit, even that of *Envy*, came upon him, which made him caſt his Javelin at *David*, and ſtudy his Deſtruction, 1 *Sam.* 18. Hence *Solomon* asks the Queſtion, *Who can ſtand before Envy? Prov.* 27. 4. as if this malignant Evil was the great diſturber of the World, and a chief cauſe of the Unhappineſs and Miſery of Mankind.

Thirdly, The evil of *Envy* is not only to our Neighbour, but to a Man's Self, and is very fatal to the Breaſt that harbours it; for it frets and gnaws the Heart, and preys upon the Soul that cheriſhes it; 'tis painful to the Mind, and hurtful to the Body; and as Diſeaſes that lie in the Bones eat up the Marrow, and brings Rottenneſs into them; ſo *Envy*, as *Solomon* tells us, *conſumes a Man, and brings rottenneſs into the Bones, Prov.* 14. 30. ſo that 'tis a degree of Self-murder: It is a Sin that makes a Man prey upon himſelf, that pines and macerates his own Body, making hollow Eyes, lean Cheeks, a pale Face, and rotten Bones:

Bones: No Ulcer, Stone, or Strangury is more painful to such a one, than to see other Men advanc'd above him; another's Rise, is as grievous to him as his own Fall, and he destroys himself with fretting at his Neighbour's Prosperity. Thus having shew'd the Nature and Evil of *Envy*, I proceed,

Thirdly, To shew *Charity* to be the best, if not the only Remedy and Preservative against it. For, First,

Charity, as was before observ'd, is Kind, and Wisheth-well to all Men; it makes Men very desirous that they should do well, and prompts them to the best Means conducing thereunto: The Charitable Person is ever ready to assist with his Prayers, his Counsel, and his best Endeavours, to promote his Neighbour's Welfare; And certainly, he that wisheth-well to another, will never envy or repine at his Prosperity. Again,

Because all Men are glad to see their Wishes take effect, *Charity* will cause Men to rejoyce in another's Welfare; it pleaseth such to see their Neighbours prosper, and adds to their Contentment, to behold the good Success and Issue of their Affairs; and he that feels a Pleasure

in others Thriving, can never grudge, or murmur at it. Yea,

Thirdly, *Charity* makes another's Happineſs to become in a great Meaſure our own; it makes us the better to ſee others in good Health, and refreſheth our Spirits to find a Chearfulneſs in theirs; every Addition to their Happineſs, adds to our Comfort, and we partake with them in all the Joys of their good Fortune; nay, as one hath well obſerv'd, *Charity* will give us a greater Pleaſure in others Proſperity, than they themſelves can have from it; for the Joy we take in it, is pure and unmix'd, and free from that Alloy of Care and Trouble, which theirs is attended withal. And this ſure will be an effectual Remedy and Preſervative againſt *Envy*.

This is indeed to Love our Neighbour as our Selves, to feel his Grief, and delight in his Welfare as our own; that as we have one common Nature, ſo we may conſult the common Good of it, eſpouſing the Intereſt, and ſharing in the Joys, and Sorrows of one another: And where this Love and true Affection dwells, there will be no room for *Envy*, For *Charity envieth not*. Here then we may take Occaſion,

Firſt,

First, To lament the great lack of this Piece of *Charity*, for how few are there that wiſh-well, deſire or delight in their Neighbour's Proſperity? yea, how many are there that wiſh-ill, endeavour and take pleaſure in their Misfortunes? what a Grief of Heart is it to ſome Men to ſee another proſper? and what ſhould add to their Comfort, creates only Trouble and Sadneſs to them; how many think themſelves miſerable for no other Reaſons, but becauſe they ſee another Happy? his Fulneſs makes them lean and pine away, and what refreſheth his Spirits, does but macerate and conſume theirs; ſo that the envious Man (as it hath been well obſerv'd) is the only Perſon to whom, without Breach of *Charity*, you may do harm, for 'tis but to do good to our Neighbour, and you cannot do him a greater Unkindneſs; he frets and grieves at what refreſhes him, and looks the more pale and wan for his chearful Countenance; and yet this evil and untoward Diſpoſition, is but too frequently found in the World, which ſets Men, not only a grudging, but maligning, and undermining one another; ſo that we are certainly fallen into thoſe unhappy Times, in which it was foretold, that

little Faith and leſs Charity ſhould be found in the Earth; and that *becauſe Iniquity would abound, the Love of many would wax cold.*

Secondly, We learn from hence, how oppoſite *Envy* is to the Temper of Chriſtianity; nothing renders us more unlike unto God, *for God is Love*, and delights to ſcatter the Influences of it upon all his Creatures; nothing is more contrary to the Nature, the Commands, and Example of our bleſſed Saviour, who inſtead of Envying, embrac'd all Opportunities of doing Good, and gave Himſelf for the Salvation of Mankind; nothing is more oppoſite to the State and Felicities of Heaven, which is the Manſion of Peace and Love, where all the Inhabitants rejoice in the Happineſs of one another.

So that *Envy* is the black Paſſion of the Devil, the Evil and Envious one; the State of Hell, and the Diſpoſition of damned Spirits, who do nothing but Deſpair of their own, and Envy the Bleſſedneſs of others. Indeed *Envy* (howſoever it be given way to) can ſerve no turn; for it hinders nothing but the Content and Happineſs of him that harbours it; it only diſturbs his preſent Peace and

Quiet

Quiet here, and qualifies him for the uneasy and restless Conversation of Furies hereafter.

In a Word, *Envy* is one of the vilest Passions of human Nature; for whereas others are appeas'd, and mended by Benefits, this grows worse, and is exasperated by them, it draws Poison out of Antidotes, and, like the Caterpillar, fastens upon, and devours the choicest Fruits.

Wherefore, In the Last place, Let us learn and practice this Act of *Charity* that excludes and suppresseth *Envy*, and teaches us rather to rejoice, than repine at our Neighbour's Prosperity. To attain this excellent Disposition, Let us,

First, Study the Art of Contentment, and labour not only to be pleas'd, but to be thankful for that Portion that is allotted us: He that is contented with his own Condition, will never grieve, or grudge at anothers; and therefore the Apostle's Advice is, *in whatsoever State we are, therewith to be content*, and there is good Reason for it, because 'tis allotted to us by him, who is Wisdom and Goodness it self, and knows better what is fit for us, than we our selves; and as he may do what he will with his own, so ought we to acquiesce in his Provi-

dence, and be thankful with the Portion he is pleas'd to give us. To this End let us,

Secondly, Look more to those beneath, than those above us; the Splendor and Greatness of some Men's Condition is apt to dazzle the Eyes, and *Envy*, like the Sun, darts its hottest Beams on the rising Ground; therefore we should take off our Eyes from the Plenty and Greatness of those above us, which is apt to create *Envy*, and fix them on the Poverty and Meanness of those below us, which may help to cure this Evil. This is the Apostle's Direction, *mind not high Things, but condescend to Men of low Estate.*

Thirdly, To cure *Envy* we must avoid too much Curiosity, and meddling in other Men's Matters; for 'tis an old Observation, *Non est curiosus, quin idem est malevolus*; He that pries too much into other Mens Affairs is commonly Envious; for *Envy* (as one hath observ'd) is a gadding Passion, and walks the Streets, and keeps but little at Home; it takes a kind of Play-Pleasure, in looking upon the Affairs and Fortunes of others, and that makes them many Times look asquint, and begets an evil Eye; whereas

he

he that minds his own Buſineſs finds but little Matter for *Envy*: In fine, to remove this Evil, Let us be rooted and grounded in Love, and that will be ſo far from diſpoſing us to grudge, that 'twill make us delight, in ſeeing and promoting our Neighbour's Welfare; for what the Apoſtle obſerves of Love's caſting out Fear, is much more true of its expelling of *Envy*; *There is no Envy in Love, perfect Love caſteth out Envy, and he that envieth is not made perfect in Love, for* Charity *envieth not.*

The

The PROPERTIES OF CHARITY: It *Vaunteth not it ſelf.*

1 Cor. XIII. 4.
Charity Vaunteth not it ſelf.

FROM that Act of *Charity*, that reſtraineth Envy, I proceed to the next, that ſuppreſſeth all Vanity and Elation of Mind, contain'd in theſe words, *Charity vaunteth not it ſelf.* The Word in the Original is περπερεύεται, which being found no where elſe in the New Teſtament, and very rarely in any Greek Author, is of ſomewhat an obſcure Signification: The beſt Expoſitors interpret it of a too great Affectation of outward Show and Appearance, and is well ren-

render'd in our Tranſlation, *Vaunteth not it ſelf*; ſo that this is that Act of *Charity* that ſuppreſſeth Vain-glory, or the doing any thing out of Vanity or Oſtentation. For the better underſtanding whereof we muſt obſerve a double Fault, too common in the World, the one in uſing, the other in beſtowing the Gifts that God hath given us; both which Faults were riſe in the Days of the Apoſtles, and are ſtill but too frequent in ours.

Firſt, I ſay, There were ſome in the Apoſtles days, that us'd their Gifts chiefly for Vanity and Oſtentation, minding not ſo much the Benefit and Edification of the Church, as their own Glory: To this end they affected to Speak with Tongues, and to ſet forth themſelves by many new and ſtrange Languages, not underſtood by them that heard them.

Now the Apoſtle ſpends the whole Fourteenth Chapter of this Epiſtle in correcting this Vanity; letting them know, Verſe the Second, that he, that to ſhew what he can do, ſpeaketh in an unknown Tongue, may indeed ſpeak unto God, and Myſteries too, but 'tis of no Uſe at all unto Men, who can receive no Benefit by it; yea, this Practice is contrary to all the Ends of Speaking, and much

much more of Prophecying, for *he that Prophecyeth* (ſaith he) *ſpeaketh to Edification, Exhortation, and Comfort*: whereas he that ſpeaketh a ſtrange Language can Benefit no Body; ſo that the Church is depriv'd of all that Inſtruction and Edification it might reap from this Gift, by a vain uſe of it; even as *a Pipe or Harp, that gives no diſtinction of Sounds*, can make no Melody. And, *If a Trumpet give an uncertain Sound, it can be of no uſe in preparing for the Battle; ſo likewiſe you, except ye utter with the Tongue things eaſie to be underſtood*, you do but beat the Air; and all you ſay, can afford no Inſtruction, as the Apoſtle argues through that whole Chapter, in which he labours hard to beat down that vaunting Opinion, and Oſtentation that ſome made of the Gift of Tongues, wherein they conſulted more their own Glory, than the Glory of God, or the Good of his Church.

Again, There were others, who affected too much, a Fineneſs and Curioſity of Language, endeavouring to ſet themſelves forth by their Eloquence, and dreſſing up their Diſcourſes with all the Flowers and Ornaments of Rhetorick; by which they ſought rather to Pleaſe, than Profit their Hearers, and to tickle

their

their Ears, more than to affect their Hearts, or amend their Lives; These the Apostle condemns, as *the enticeing words of Man's Wisdom*, and no ways suited to the Plainness and Simplicity of the Gospel; this was a frequent Abuse of Spiritual Gifts in the Apostle's Days, in which too many still Vaunt and Pride themselves.

Again, There were others, that us'd their Gifts to the making of Schisms, and Divisions in the Church, affecting to be the Heads of Parties, and Fomenters of Faction; they could not be contented with a lower Station, but with *Diotrephes*, courted Pre-eminence, and desir'd to be Some-body. These the Apostle describes to be *proud*, *heady* and vain *boasters of themselves*, which kind of Elation of Minds express'd here by *Vaunting it self.*

Now *Charity* is that Virtue, that corrects this Vanity, that pricks this Bladder, and keeps Men from thus Vaunting themselves; For,

First, It teaches us to use our Gifts to the Honour of him that gave them, and to prefer his Glory far above our own; it directs us, as we receive all from him, so to refer all to him; to aim at his Honour in all we do, and to assume nothing

to

to ourſelves, but the Shame, and Senſe of our own Unworthineſs; and this will effectually reſtrain all Vain-glory, which is but a little empty Air, and lighter than Vanity it ſelf.

Secondly, Charity teaches us to uſe our Gifts to the good of others, and to do all things to Edification; it hunts not after Applauſe, nor courts the vain Breath of the Multitude, but ſeeks to do them Good, and ſave their Souls; *Knowledge puffeth up* (ſaith the Apoſtle) but *Charity edifieth.* That is, *Charity* corrects the windy and flatulent Quality of Knowledge, and renders it Uſeful and Serviceable to Mankind; this is ſo eſſential a Property of *Charity*, that 'tis often in Scripture taken for it: *to do all things through Charity, and to the uſe of Edifying*, being ſynonymous Terms, importing the ſame thing: But does *Charity* forbid the uſe, or ſtudy of divers Tongues? or condemn all Elegance and Ornaments of Speech? No, it only condemns Vanity and Oſtentation of them; there may be a good uſe of the Tongues in propagating the Goſpel, to Men of divers Countries and Languages; and likewiſe of Eloquence and Rhetorick, in publiſhing of it, the better to recommend it to the World,

World, and more effectually to perſwade to the Love and Practice of it: There is indeed a natural deſire of Glory, which is not only innocent but uſeful, and proves many times a ſpur to brave and virtuous Undertakings; the Souldier's Courage is ſharpen'd by a Thirſt for Honour, and a Deſire of Glory adds Wings, and puts Life into Buſineſs. A wiſe Man hath obſerv'd, that to help us in ſteering our Courſe aright, there muſt be ſome Sail as well as Ballaſt; and even in the Fame of Learning, the Flight will be but ſlow, without ſome Feathers of Oſtentation. But ſtill in Matters of Religion, nothing is to be done out of Vain-glory, but all things to Edification, and with a deſire of Benefiting one another.

Thirdly, *Charity* teaches us to uſe our Gifts to the promoting of Peace, Order and Unity in the Church; for ſince theſe are ſo abſolutely neceſſary, both to the publick and private Welfare, the Love we owe to Mankind, and a deſire of Benefiting them, will prompt us to preſerve them; and becauſe nothing tends more to diſturb the Peace and Quiet of the World, than an ambitious Thirſt of Vain-glory; *Charity* will's us, above all things, to ſubdue and mortify it: *without Peace*

and

and Holineſs (ſaith the Apoſtle) *no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*; for Heaven is the Region of Peace and Tranquility, and he that does not ſincerely deſire and endeavour after it, is neither fitted to live Quietly here, or Happily hereafter. Theſe were ſome of the principal Abuſes of ſpiritual Gifts, in which too many Vaunted themſelves in the Apoſtle's Days, which our Text tells us, are beſt cur'd and corrected by this Grace of *Charity*.

But beſide theſe Faults in uſing or rather abuſing of ſpiritual Gifts, to bad Purpoſes, there was another, in beſtowing the Gifts of Fortune, or the temporal good Things of this Life, in which likewiſe too many Vaunted themſelves; and that was their doing good Offices meerly for Vain-glory, and Oſtentation; this was the great Fault of the Phariſees, who ſounded a Trumpet before their Alms, to alarm Spectators, and did their good Works to be ſeen of Men; they aim'd chiefly, if not only, at the Applauſe of Men in all they did, and fiſh'd for Honour with the Baits of *Charity*; This manner of giving Alms, we find more condemn'd, than commended by our Saviour; who inſtead of rewarding their

Charity,

Charity, ſharply reprehended their Hypocriſy. They look'd after the Air of Men's Applauſe, and this our Saviour tells them they had, which being all they aim'd at, was all they were ever like to have; and indeed, their airy *Charity* neither ſought, nor deſerv'd any other. Now the Grace of *Charity*, rightly underſtood and practis'd, is the moſt effectual Cure of this Vanity. For this teaches us,

Firſt, To do all our good Works from a right Principle, that is, from the Love of God, our Neighbour, and our Selves.

The Love we bear to God, will make us regard his Image, and do good Offices to all that bear it; and becauſe the meaneſt Perſon is nearly allied to our Maker, having a Soul ſtamp'd with his Image and Superſcription, and a Body made with his Hands, true *Charity* will's us to love him for God's Sake, and to do him good for the Relation he bears to him, who is Goodneſs it ſelf; and when we are thus mov'd to pity, and relieve their Diſtreſs, upon the Score of God's Command, and for his Sake, then do we act upon a right Principle. Again,

Our Neighbour is but a Part of our ſelves, partaking of the ſame Nature, faſhion'd by the ſame Hand, endow'd with the ſame Faculties, and ſubject to the ſame Wants and Infirmities; and when we thus look upon him as our Kinſman, our Brother, our Self multiplied into another Perſon, and do good to him upon that Score, then does our *Charity* move in the right Sphere, and we act upon good Grounds.

Moreover, God Almighty hath not only commanded, but encouraged us to do good Works, with the hopes of an ample Reward; promiſing that ſuch as ſhew Mercy to others, ſhall be ſure to find Mercy themſelves, and what they lay out this Way ſhall be return'd a Hundred Fold, either in Kind or Value: Now God's Promiſes being deſign'd as Encouragements to our Duty, we may do good to others with the Hopes of receiving good to our ſelves; and when with one Eye we pity our poor Brother, we may ſafely fix the other on the Recompence of Reward, and in ſo doing our *Charity* ſteers a right Courſe, and moves on a right Principle.

Secondly, A duly regulated *Charity*, not only flows from a right Principle, but

but is carried on by good Means; that is, Alms are to conſiſt only of well-gotten Subſtance, and we are to beſtow nothing but what is juſtly our own; God Almighty, who hates Robbery for a Burnt-Offering, does not allow us to take from one to give to another, nor ſeek to help out one with the Spoils of another; for this is to colour over Oppreſſion with a ſhow of Sanctity, and to multiply Evil under a Pretence of doing Good; 'twas the Phariſees fault, to give Alms of what they poſſeſſed by Rapine and Injuſtice, thinking that the caſting in a few Grains into the Alms-box of the Poor, was ſufficient to atone for all the ill Arts and Methods of getting it; ſuch a *Charity* as this may indeed *Vaunt it ſelf*, and is commonly attended with Oſtentation and Vain-glory; accordingly, we find them ſometimes ſounding a Trumpet before their Alms, at other times, boaſting they paid Tythes, and gave Alms of all that they poſſeſſed; as if it were all loſt, unleſs the World knew and rung of it.

Whereas true *Charity* is accompanied with more Juſtice, and greater Secreſy; for it gives nothing but its own, does the greateſt Good it can with the leaſt

Noiſe, and *lets not the Left-hand know what the Right-hand doth.*

Thirdly, *Charity* hath regard, not only to the Principle from which it proceeds, and the Means by which it is carried on, but likewiſe to the End to which it is directed: And theſe are chiefly, the Glory of God, who hath not only requir'd, but annex'd a liberal Reward to the Practice of it: And the Good of Mankind, whom he hath made Sharers in each others Proſperity.

Where is Boaſting then? as the Apoſtle asks in another Caſe; *why 'tis excluded? by what Law? by the Law of Works?* No, by the Law of *Charity*, which *Vaunteth not it ſelf*, and is an utter Enemy to all Vain-glory.

Thus we ſee the Senſe of this Branch or Property of *Charity*, wherein we are told, that it *Vaunteth not it ſelf*; which we ſee implies in it ſomething Negative, and ſomething Poſitive; the Negative Part of it excludes all Oſtentation and Vain-glory, both in the uſe of ſpiritual Gifts, and in the beſtowing all temporal good Things.

The Poſitive Part of it requires Fidelity, and Sincerity in both, employing our Gifts to the Honour of our Maſter, and

and doing all things to the Edification and Comfort of one another.

It remains then, that we learn and practice this Piece of *Charity*, in both the Parts of it.

Firſt, Avoiding all Vanity, both in uſing and beſtowing the good Things intruſted with us; endeavouring rather to Approve our Selves unto God, than to get the Applauſe and Honour of Men: We find our Saviour blaming ſome, for loving the Praiſe of Men, more than the Honour that comes from God; which is to prefer the Shadow before the Subſtance, and to ſuch it often happens, as to the Dog in the Fable, who greedily catching at the One, commonly loſe the Other.

He that ſows the Wind ſhall reap the Whirl-wind, and he that hunts after Applauſe, will in the end find nothing but Air and Diſappointment; The People's Hoſannah's are ſoon follow'd with Crucifiges, and the brighteſt Earthly Glory, like the Morning-Sun, is quickly over-caſt with Clouds and Darkneſs; ſo that to ſeek for the Praiſe of Men is to purſue the Wind, or to hunt a Shadow, which flie from them that Purſue them: Wherefore,

In the laſt Place, Let us endeavour to cure this Itch of Vain-glory, and ſuppreſs all inordinate Love of the Praiſe of Men; to which end, as we have ſeen ſome thing of the Folly, ſo let us conſider the Danger of it; *How can ye believe*, ſaith our Saviour, *when ye receive honour one of another*? Vain-glory it ſeems hinders us from receiving of Chriſt, and that which excludes Chriſt out of our Hearts, muſt ſhut us out of all Hopes of Mercy from him; it deprives us of all the Reward of our Good Works, and whilſt we hunt too eagerly after the Praiſe of Men, we commonly loſe the Favour of God; and certainly, that muſt be Vain-glory indeed, that for a little empty Air of Men's Applauſe, expoſes us to the Wrath and Diſpleaſure of God.

We read of *Herod*, that making an Oration to the People, who with Shouts and Acclamations cried it up for the Voice of a God, and not of a Man; and thereby Aſſuming to himſelf the Glory, that was due to God only, was immediately ſmitten by an Angel, ſo that He Died; and becauſe he gave not God the Glory, became a Prey to the vileſt Inſects, and was eaten up of Worms. So dangerous a thing is it, to Rob God of

his

his Honour, and to take more of it to our ſelves, than of right belongs to us.

And therefore, *Laſtly*, To check this Vanity, let us conſider, that we neither have, are, or can do any thing of our Selves, but all theſe are meerly given and deriv'd to us; and 'tis, you know, a great Piece of Folly to look gay, and big with a few borrow'd Feathers, and to ſtrut in the Ornaments of another, which may be ſtript from us: *What haſt thou* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *which thou haſt not receiv'd, and if thou haſt receiv'd it, why boaſteſt thou thy ſelf, as if thou receiv'd'ſt it not?* Why, we owe our very Being to the Bounty of our Maker, and depend every Minute upon his Mercy, for the Maintenance and Support of it; all our Gifts, both Spiritual and Temporal are his, and ſure they have no reaſon to look Big, who have nothing of their own, or to Vaunt themſelves, that live wholly upon *Charity*. In a Word then,

Let us direct all our Actions, not to our own, but to God's Glory; knowing, that the beſt way to advance our own Honour, is to do all things to the Glory of God: Let us *follow after Charity*, and thoſe things whereby we may *edifie one*

another, since all our Gifts were given us to profit withal; and the End of all our Talents is the Edification of the Church; let it be our great care to use them to those Ends, not affecting Vain-glory, but doing all things through *Charity*, which *Vaunteth not it self.*

The

The PROPERTIES OF *CHARITY*: It is *Not Puffed up.*

1 Cor. XIII. 4.

Charity is not Puffed up.

THIS Property of *Charity* is near allied to the foregoing, and is therefore fitly joyn'd with it; the difference between them is only this:

The former, which is *Vaunteth not it ſelf*, relates chiefly to the outward Show and Appearance, and checks all Oſtentation and Vain-glory.

This of not being *puffed up*, reſpects mainly the inward Man, checks all internal Pride and Swellings in the Mind: So that they differ from each other, as the

the Effect does from the Cauſe; for as *from the abundance of the Heart the Mouth ſpeaketh*, ſo from the inward Swellings of the Mind proceed all External Vanity and Oſtentation.

The Word here rendred *puffeth up*, is in the Original φυσιοῦται, which ſignifies an inward Tumor or Riſing of the Mind, whereby Men think more highly of themſelves than the ought to think; and ſo 'tis oppoſed to Humility, Modeſty, and Lowlineſs of Mind. And conſequently,

This Art or Property of *Charity* corrects all thoſe vain, high, and arrogant Conceits, which Men are too apt to Entertain of themſelves; and therefore in treating of it, I muſt here again obſerve,

Firſt, Something negative, which is to remove out of our Minds all ſuch vain and high Thoughts. And,

Secondly, Something poſitive, which is to beget in us more humble and modeſt Opinions of our ſelves.

Firſt, I ſay, this Property of *Charity*, that keeps us from being *puffed up*, reſtrains all proud and high Thoughts of our ſelves: *His Soul that is Liſted up* (ſaith the Prophet) *is not upright in him*, *Hab.* 2. 4. his Heart is neither right towards

towards God, his Neighbour, or himself; all which might ſuggeſt Arguments enough to pull down ſuch vain Imaginations: 'tis a Diſeaſe of the Mind to be troubled with theſe Swellings, 'tis Wind we know that blows up both the Bubble and the Bladder; and 'tis only the fickle and fooliſh Mind that is ſubject to theſe Tumors; we read in Scripture of the Leaven of the Phariſees, which puffed them up with Pride, and not only ſwelled, but ſoured their Minds againſt others.

This is indeed too naturally, and therefore too Common an Evil, for corrupt Nature is too apt to ſwell and look big, and vain Men are eaſily puffed up with an Opinion of their own Excellencies; we derive this Vanity from our firſt Parents, who wou'd fain be as Gods, in Knowing Good and Evil, which is ſtill cheriſhed and hightned in us, by that ſame Evil Spirit that firſt beguiled them.

And as Mankind is but too prone to this Evil, ſo hath it a moſt pernicious Influence upon their Peace and Welfare, the ſad Effects whereof are too many and great to be paſs'd away in Silence: For,

Firſt, This Self-conceit occaſions ſome Men's doubting and disbelieving many divine

divine Truths, becauſe they do not, forſooth, ſuit with their Reaſon and Underſtanding: thus the Doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, and Reſurrection, muſt be rejected as incredible, becauſe they agree not with their weak and fond Apprehenſions; yea, God ſhall not be at all, unleſs he pleaſe to be, and do as they would have him. Again,

Secondly, This high Opinion of their own Wiſdom and Knowledge makes them pry into the ſecret Counſels of God, and paſs their Judgment upon all the Events and Occurrences of Providence: Thus we find ſome Sainting their own Sect, and Reprobating all others that go not their way; 'tis no new thing to interpret temporal Succeſſes as a Juſtification of a bad Cauſe, and to condemn Good Men for ſome Diſaſters and Calamities that befall them, both which are the Effects of an overweaning Conceit that ſome have of themſelves. Moreover,

Thirdly, This Self-conceit makes too many think themſelves wiſer than their Teachers, pretending to Expound the moſt difficult Parts of Scripture, and reſolving the Niceſt Queſtions in Divinity with greater Confidence, than the moſt learned Doctors; yea, this hath made Illite-

Illiterate Persons and Mechanicks Invade the Priest's Office, taking upon them to *be Teachers of others, when themselves have need to be taught, what are the first Principles of the Oracles of God.* Again,

Fourthly, This overweaning Conceit, that too many have of themselves, makes them Wiser than their Governors, and to pick Quarrels with the Laws and Ordinances of their Superiors; and hence they set up a Judgment of Discretion, which they oppose to all the Wisdom and Authority of Superiors; and tho' it be their Office and Duty to take care of the publick Peace and Safety, yet no Orders or Determinations made to that end must take place, but what are approved of by these Men's Judgment of Discretion, which renders the Magistrate's Office useless, and sets up themselves as the supreme Judges of all Matters, both in Church and State. Furthermore,

Fifthly, This vain Conceit, that some have of themselves, makes them pragmatical Medlers and Busie-bodies in other Men's Matters, having an Oar (as we say) in Every Man's Boat, and putting his Sickle into Every One's Corn, by which they become Impatient and uneasie to one another: The conceited

Person

Perſon will be thruſting himſelf into other Men's Buſineſs, uſurping Authority, and claiming a Power that belongs not to him; he will ſcarce allow his Neighbour any Diſcretion to do his own Buſineſs, but will aſſume all Wiſdom to himſelf; if any thing be well done, 'twas by his Advice, if it prove otherwiſe, 'twas for not hearkening to him: In a Word, he is in at all things, and nothing can be done as it ſhould without him. Once more,

Sixthly, This high and ſwelling Conceit of Men's own Wiſdom, makes them obſtinate and pertinacious in their own private Fancies and Opinions, tho' never ſo falſe and groundleſs: There are none more apt to run into Error, nor more hard to be reclaim'd from it, than ſuch as are puffed up with a vain Opinion of their own Parts and Wiſdom; this is evident in the Sectaries and Diſſenters of our Days, for tho' no Cauſe hath ever been more apparently confuted, and the Weakneſs of all their Pleas and Pretences more fully laid open, yet their ſpiritual Pride will not ſuffer them to Yield, and the high Thoughts they have of themſelves, makes them ſtand out againſt all the Commands of their lawful Superiors;

all

all the Inſtructions of their lawful Paſtors, and againſt the Opinion and Practice of good Men in all Ages. In ſhort, this overweaning Eſteem, that too many have of themſelves, is the great occaſion of all thoſe Troubles that moleſt and diſturb the World, 'tis the principal Root and Foundation of all our religious Quarrels and Differences: For whilſt Men are fond of their own Ways, and ſet up their weak Judgments above the Wiſdom and Authority of their Superiors, 'tis no wonder if they run into great Miſtakes, and ſacrifice Peace and Love to their trifling Opinions. Again,

Pride is the Foundation of all private Feuds and Animoſities, for when Men over-value themſelves, they commonly under-value and deſpiſe others, and care not how they uſe them, which naturally engenders Strife, and begets Quarrels: Hence *Solomon* tells us, that *a proud Heart ſtirreth up Strife*, and elſe-where, *only by Pride cometh Contention.* Theſe and many more are the ſad Effects of this Haughtineſs and Elation of Mind, by which too many are puffed up into vain and high Thoughts of themſelves.

Now this Grace of *Charity* is the only Remedy againſt this Evil, for this corrects

corrects the ſwelling of the Mind, and keeps it from being puffed up: It pricks the Bladder of Pride, lets out the corrupt Matter, and ſhrinks it into a low and mean Opinion of it ſelf, and this it does ſeveral Ways.

Firſt, It keeps us from being too Opinionative of our own Knowledge, and makes our Reaſon ſtoop to Faith, whereby we are kept ſteady in the Belief of divine Myſteries, tho' we cannot fathom the Depth of them: *Charity* will not only ſuffer, but require us to ſuppoſe God to be infinitely Wiſer than we are, and that he can do, and order many Things, of which we are neither able, nor concerned to know the Reaſons; it ſhews us the Weakneſs and Imperfection of our Underſtanding, even in common and ordinary Matters, and that we daily ſee many things of which we cannot fully comprehend the Reaſon; and that will teach us much more to yield to Spiritual and ſublimer Truths, that are above our reach, and humbly to acquieſce in Divine Revelations. Thus does *Charity* keep down the Impoſthumations of the Mind, and make Knowledge, which would other wiſe Puff up, to Edify, and thereby cure that Scepticiſm, which is

the

the Pride and Folly of the preſent Age.

Secondly, This Grace will make Men ſenſible of their manifold and great Defects, and thereby keep them humble and lowly in Heart; 'twill give them the ſenſe of their own Weakneſs, and preſerve them from truſting in their own Strength; 'twill ſhew them the Shortneſs and Defects of their Knowledge, and keep them from valuing and relying on their own Wiſdom. In a Word, 'twill give them a ſight of their own Unworthineſs, an utter Inability to help themſelves, and that will check all vain Conceits of their own Worth, Wealth, or Wiſdom, and teach them to depend entirely on the Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs of God.

Thirdly, *Charity* teaches every one to know his own Place, and keep to his proper Station; not invading the Prince's, or the Prieſt's Office, by preferring their own Judgment above them, as the manner of ſome is, but ſubmitting to their higher Authority, and yielding to their greater Wiſdom, as their Station requires. *Know them that are over you in the Lord*, (ſaith the Apoſtle) *and eſteem them highly for their Works ſake*; And *Let every Soul be ſubject to the higher Powers.* Rom. 13.

God Almighty hath placed Mankind in a Subordination to one another, for the Good of the whole; he hath appointed ſome to Teach, and others to Rule; and what Order could be kept, if they that are to be Taught and Rul'd by them, ſhould think themſelves wiſer and better than both? what mad work would it make in an Army, if every Common-Souldier ſhould leave his Station, and take upon him to direct his Officer, or General? what Confuſion would it bring into a Family, if the Children and Servants, inſtead of Obeying, ſhould diſpute the Commands of the Maſter, and ſet up their own Diſcretion above his? why the ſame, or greater Diſorders, muſt enſue in Church and State, where Subjects take upon them to be wiſer than their Superiors, and quarrel with thoſe Orders, which they ought to obſerve. Now *Charity* will ſubdue this Pride and Self-conceit, and teach us ſo much Modeſty and Humility, as to ſubmit to our Betters, and not to oppoſe our private Opinions to the publick Determinations of the Church; 'twill keep every one in his own Place and Rank, contenting themſelves with their own Buſineſs, and confining them within the Bounds of

their

their own particular Calling; this will preſerve the Peace and Quiet of the World, and without it, all other Methods and Expedients will be ineffectual.

Fourthly, *Charity* will teach us to *be ſubject one to another*, and inſtead of lifting up our Selves above others, to *eſteem others better than our ſelves*. This is that Chriſtian Modeſty ſo much preſs'd by St. *Paul* in the 12*th* Chap. to the *Romans*, where he wills, *every Man not to think more highly of himſelf than he ought to think, but to think ſoberly, according as God hath dealt to every Man the meaſure of Faith*; and to be ſo far from being Puffed up, that we chuſe in *honour to prefer one another*. Theſe humble Thoughts of our Selves, and this Charitable Opinion of Others, would put an end to all our Differences and Diviſions, which are the effects of Pride, and proceed from Men's being Puffed up with a vain Conceit of themſelves; for ſuch a lowlineſs of Mind, would keep us low in our own Eyes, and that would hinder all Strife and peremptory adhereing to our own Judgment, and make us yield to the Wiſdom of our Betters: where this humble Temper is, Men are willing to learn and to unlearn too, what they

have been taught amiſs; they will quietly hear and attend to what may be ſaid, as well againſt, as for their Opinion, weighing Matters without Paſſion and Partiality, and not be aſhamed to go over to the better Side; they will confeſs their Doubts, and be willing to receive Satisfaction; and as deſirous to know the Truth, as a Traveller is to find out the right Way to his Journey's End: what Quiet and Peace would this amicable Diſpoſition create in the World? how ſoon would our Diviſions and Subdiviſions ceaſe, if *Charity* did more abound, and the Love of too many did not wax cold? Wherefore,

To draw to a Concluſion, Let us from this Diſcourſe learn, *Firſt*, To ſubdue that proud, arrogant Conceit of our Selves, which is ſo contrary to the Grace of *Charity*; if you obſerve it, there are many who complain of the Eſtabliſhed Laws and Orders of the Church, and would have them laid aſide, only to make way for what they, in their great Wiſdom, think better; and 'tho they like not what their Superiors in Place and Wiſdom have appointed, yet they would have all Men receive and approve of their Model; and how is it poſſible

that

that ever Peace, Order, or Unity ſhould take place, whilſt every One would frame a Church to himſelf, and deviſe his own Government? Thus Pride muſt be mortified before Peace can obtain; and we muſt learn not to aim at things above our Sphere and Capacity.

Furthermore, Let us *Secondly*, as the Apoſtle St. *Paul* adviſes us, *Put on Humbleneſs of Mind*, *Col.* 3. 12. and as St. *Peter* teaches us, *be cloathed with Humility*: Nothing better becomes us, than that plain Dreſs, nor can there be a greater Ornament than the Garb of Humility; which will eaſily appear by conſidering, 1 Pet. 5. 5.

Firſt, The Weakneſs and Scantineſs of our own Knowledge, how eaſie it is to be miſtaken, and how often we have been ſo; and that will make us more to Diſtruſt our Selves, and to lay greater Streſs upon the Wiſdom and Authority of Superiors: As for things neceſſary to our Salvation, they are plainly revealed to us in holy Scripture, and for Matters of Ceremony and leſſer Moment, we ever are to be humble and modeſt; to think our Governors wiſer, and to know better what is beſt and fitteſt for the Publick Good than our ſelves. And then if we are not (as we ought) of one Mind, yet we

ſhall live as lovingly and eaſily, as if we were.

Secondly, Conſider how Odious, and Diſtaſtful unto God, all Pride and Self-conceit is; *Solomon* tells us, that *A proud Heart is an abomination to the Lord*, and St. *Peter*, that *God reſiſteth the Proud*. Meaning, that he not only denies his Grace and Bleſſing to ſuch, but ſets himſelf againſt them. Yea, they are commonly Odious too in the Sight of Men, all Men conſpiring to Hate a Proud Perſon, and however ſuch pleaſe and hugg themſelves, none are more generally Derided and Deſpiſed than they; this is evident in the Phariſees, whoſe Arrogance and Self-conceit rendred them at laſt Vile and Deſpicable in the Eyes of God and Men: So that *Pride generally goes before a fall*, and *they that exalt themſelves ſhall be abaſed*.

Mat. 23. 12. *Thirdly*, Conſider how graceful and pleaſing to all Men, Modeſty and Humility are, none generally riſing higher in the Eſteem of God and Men, than they that are loweſt in their Own; there are Charms in this Grace that invite Affection, and daily experience confirms the Truth of our Saviour's Words, *They that humble themſelves ſhall be exalted*: where-

wherefore let us ſuppreſs all proud Looks and towring Imaginations, for, What have we to be Proud of? to be Proud of our Parentage or Birth, is to be lifted up for what we contributed nothing to, and if we degenerate, we become the Blot and Blemiſh of our Family *.

To be Proud of our Parts, either of Body or Mind, is to lie at the Mercy of every Diſeaſe, which may in an Inſtant deprive us of both.

To be proud of Riches, is to lie at the Mercy of Thieves and Robbers, who may ſoon deſpoil us of them; and to imitate the Folly of the Rich Man in the Goſpel, who was puffed up with the Thoughts of Goods laid up for many Years, of which he was depriv'd before the next Morning.

In a Word, wherein ſoever we differ from others, if it be Bad, 'tis our own, and ſure we have no reaſon to glory in our Shame; if it be good, 'tis received of God; and *If thou haſt receiv'd it* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *why boaſteſt thou thy ſelf, as if thou receivedſt it not.* 1 Cor. 4. 7.

And as the Sin and Folly of Pride is great, ſo is the Danger of it much great-

* *Nam genus & proavos & quæ non fecimus ipſi vix ea noſtra voco.*

er; for it ſets both God and Man againſt it, who both conſpire to *pull down the Mighty from their Seat, and to exalt the Humble and Meek*: Which made the Wiſe-man truly affirm, That *Pride goeth before Deſtruction, and a haughty Spirit before a Fall.* And elſewhere, *before Deſtruction the Heart is haughty; and before Honour is Humility.*

Lu. 14. 11.

Wherefore to conclude, Let us mortifie all that Pride and Haughtineſs of Mind, that is apt to ſwell us up into a vain Opinion of our Selves, and learn this Piece of *Charity*, that *is not puffed up*, but keeps us always humble and lowly in our own Eyes.

The PROPERTIES OF CHARITY: It is *Not Unſeemly.*

1 Cor. XIII. 5.

Doth not behave itſelf Unſeemly.

FROM that Act of *Charity* that ſubdues Pride, and ſuggeſts Humility, I proceed to the

Next, Which checks all Unſeemly Behaviour, the uſual Attendant of the one, and teaches a due and decent Demeanor to all Men, the natural Effect of the other.

This Property of *Charity* is here deliver'd to us in theſe Words, *doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly:* The Word in the Original is ἀσχημονεῖ, which ſignifies to act

act out of Order, or Rule, to miſtake our Scheme or Figure, and to do things out of ſorts: For the better underſtanding hereof, we muſt have recourſe to that Rule, preſcrib'd by the Apoſtle, in the cloſe of the next Chapter, where he wills, that *all things be done decently, and in order.* In the Original it is, εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν, which ſignifies an orderly Form or Figure of Action; to keep within the Rule, and to do all things in a due Decorum.

The Expreſſion alludes either to Souldiers in an Army, who are to keep their Rank, and obſerve the Order of their ſuperior Officers in Military Diſcipline; without which they diſorder the whole Army, and from a Regular Body turn it into a Confus'd Rabble or Multitude, expos'd to all the Hazards and Miſeries of a Battle: Or elſe to Workmen in Architecture or Building, who are to work by Line and Rule, according to the Model given by the chief Architect; otherwiſe inſtead of an orderly Structure it becomes a confus'd heap of Rubbiſh and Ruin. In like manner all Men, and more eſpecially, all good Chriſtians, are to keep within the Lines of their Duty to God and Man, both in their Civil and Reli-

Religious Converſation, and to obſerve the Rules of Decency and Order in both; without which, they are ſaid to walk Diſorderly, and behave themſelves Unſeemly.

Now *Charity* (ſaith he) οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ, that is, this Virtue preſerves this Scheme and Figure; it keeps Men from breaking Order, and puts a Comelineſs and Decency into all their Behaviour. So that this is that Act of *Charity*, that reſtrains all Irregularities in Words and Geſtures, and directs to a ſeemly and becoming Carriage towards all Men, in their ſeveral Stations and Capacities. And therefore in Diſcourſing of it, I muſt,

Firſt, Conſider the ſeveral Relations and Capacities that Men ſtand in one to another.

Secondly, I muſt ſhew that this Grace of *Charity*, teaches us a due Demeanor to every One in their ſeveral Stations. And,

Thirdly, That it helps to prevent all unſeemly Carriage to any in either, and when we have well-weighed and clear'd theſe things, we ſhall plainly ſee the Truth of what is here affirm'd, that *Charity does not behave it ſelf Unſeemly.* For the

Firſt,

First, Mankind may be conſider'd in theſe three Ranks, *viz.* of Superiors, Inferiors, and Equals; for ſome are plac'd above others, to Govern and Inſtruct them: and theſe are the Superiors both in Church and State: Others are ſubjected to their Authority and Inſtruction, and theſe are the Inferiors in both: Again, there are others that ſtand upon the ſame Level, in reſpect of each other, without any Authority of doing either, and theſe are Equals to one another: In the Natural Body (we know) all the Members have not the ſame Office and Dignity, but ſome are plac'd above, as the Head, to guide and direct the reſt; Others are plac'd under, as the Hand to labour, the Feet to walk, and all in a Subordination and Dependance upon one another. So likewiſe is it in the Politick Bodies of States and Kingdoms, where the ſeveral Members have their ſeveral Offices and Stations; ſome, with the Head, are to guide with their Counſel; others, with the Hand, are to aſſiſt with their Labour; ſome are to be Eyes to the Blind; others Feet to the Lame: In a word, Some are to Teach and Rule, others are to be Taught and Ruled by them. Now there are ſeveral

Duties

Duties, that appertain to these several Stations, the faithful Discharging whereof, is that decent Demeanor that becometh Christians, and to neglect them is to behave themselves Unseemly: and this will lead me in the

Next Place, To shew *Charity* to be that excellent Way, that guides us aright in these Matters, and helps us to behave our selves seemly in all these Stations. To evince which, we must,

First, Consider our Selves with relation to our Superiors, and see what is requir'd to behave our Selves seemly towards them; to which end we are to look upon them as God's Ministers and Vicegerents here on Earth, upon whom he hath stamp'd his own Image and Authority, and whom he hath thereby Commission'd to Govern, in his stead, this lower World; So that to behave our Selves seemly towards them is,

First, To Honour and Reverence their Persons, to account them Sacred and Inviolable, for the Sake of His Majesty whom they represent, as we are wont to do to the Ambassadors of Princes, in Honor to those that send them. Again,

Secondly, we are, as the Apostle directs, to *submit to every Ordinance of Man*

Man for the Lord's ſake, to the King as Supreme, and to Governors, as thoſe that are ſent by him, for the Puniſhment of Evil-doers, and the Praiſe of them that do well; that is, We are not to Diſpute, but readily to Obey all their lawful Commands, and in all doubtful Matters we are to yield to their Authority, and ſubmit to their greater Wiſdom; who, by reaſon of their higher Station, and greater Advantages, ought in Modeſty to be ſuppos'd to ſee farther, and know more, than our lower Circumſtances will admit of: This is that decent Deportment we owe to our Superiours, without which we behave our Selves Unſeemly towards them, and therefore *Charity*, which evermore conſults the Publick Good, will teach us carefully to obſerve it.

In the next Place, Let us conſider our Selves in relation to our Inferiors, and what it is to behave our Selves ſeemly towards them. And here let our Station be never ſo high, we are not to trample upon any that are below us; for the Apoſtle bids us, not to *Mind high things, but to condeſcend to Men of low eſtate.* The greateſt Perſons are to look upon their Inferiors as their Fellow-creatures, as

Children

Children of the ſame Father, Servants of the ſame Family, and Members of the ſame myſtical Body of Chriſt, and to treat them accordingly. Princes are to conſult the Peace and Proſperity of their Subjects; Parents the Welfare of their Children, and Maſters the Good of their Servants. The Rich are to ſuccour and relieve the Poor; the Wiſe to inſtruct the ignorant; and all that are in any Places of Power, are to uſe it for the Defence and Encouragement of thoſe that need it. This is that comely Deportment we owe to our Inferiors; and the Grace of *Charity*, where it is rightly underſtood and practiſed, will teach us to behave our Selves thus ſeemly to all that are beneath us. Moreover,

Thirdly, Let us conſider our Selves with relation to our Equals; and here to behave our Selves ſeemly towards them, is to treat them with Courteſy, Candor and Affability, to be kind, gentle, eaſie to be intreated, and as far as we can, be uſeful to all that are about us; our Carriage towards them muſt be free, friendly and obliging, receiving them with all the due Reſpect and Civility, and doing them all the good Offices we can: This kind of Deportment *Charity* teaches us to

ſhew

ſhew to all our Equals, treating them with fair Words, kind Looks, and friendly Behaviour; which obliging Carriage is commonly rewarded with the good Word, the fair Opinion, and the Return of the ſame Civilities, from all that are about us: Of this our bleſſed Saviour hath left us an excellent Example, in the Freedom and Affableneſs of his Converſation, tho' the preciſe Phariſees ſeem'd to blame it in him, and others ſtill, who pretend much to Religion, ſhew but little, or nothing of it.

In ſhort, *Charity* teaches us to behave our Selves ſeemly towards all Men, by keeping us to Juſtice in all our Ways, to Truth in all our Words, Fidelity in all our Promiſes, and Honeſty in all our Dealings; which things are not only the great Duties, but Ornaments too of our Chriſtian Profeſſion. From whence I proceed to ſhew,

Thirdly, That *Charity* helps to prevent all the Indecencies, and Irregularities of Converſation; which will farther ſhew, that it doth not behave it ſelf Unſeemly, in any of the forementiond Capacities or Relations. For,

Firſt, It teaches us to avoid all unbecoming and undutiful Carriage towards Superiors;

Superiors; it will not suffer us to harbour any bad Thought of them, much less, to vent any hard, or unworthy Speeches; and least of all, to rebell or lift up the Hand against them: It forbids us to *Despise Dominions, or speak evil of Dignities*; and acquaints us with the Danger and Damnation that is denounc'd against all Resistance, *Rom.* 12. 2. There is indeed an inordinate Self-love, that prompts Men to disturb Government, to shake the Crowns of Princes, and to fish, in hopes of getting something, in Troubled Waters: But true *Charity*, which evermore desires the Publick Good, checks such disorderly Efforts of Avarice and Ambition; follows those things that make for Peace, and seeks not to redress one Evil by another: In a Word, It gives a grateful Sense of the great Benefits of Government, and will not behave itself Unseemly towards those, by whose Care and Protection we enjoy them.

Secondly, *Charity* restrains Men from all insolent, and insulting Carriage towards their Inferiors: For it banishes all low and unworthy Thoughts of them, by which they might be led to despise and deal hardly with them; it teaches them to consider all Men as their Fellow-Sub-

jects, and Servants to their great Lord and Maſter; partaking of the ſame Nature, and born to the ſame Inheritance with themſelves; and this will incline them rather to uſe them as Brethren, than inſult over them as Slaves.

Charity, will cauſe Superiors to look on themſelves only as Truſtees of that Power which is committed to them, and that they are Accountable for it to him, from whom they receiv'd it; it lets them know, that God inveſteth them with his Authority, not to domineer and trample upon their Fellow-Creatures, but to promote and preſerve the Common Good, and this will prompt them to uſe it accordingly. Yea, this excellent Grace will teach all Men, that are any ways above others, in Wiſdom, Wealth, or Power, to make uſe of thoſe Advantages not to the Grief, but the Good of Mankind: 'twill make the Wiſe and the Learned, not to deſpiſe, but direct the leſs knowing; the Wealthy not to contemn, but countenance the Needy: The Powerful not to oppreſs, but ſupport the Weak; and thus under all the Advantages of human Life, it does not behave it ſelf Unſeemly to thoſe that want them.

Thirdly, *Charity* teaches us to avoid all

four

four, moroſe, and ſurly Behaviour towards Equals: *Nabal*, for his Churliſhneſs, is in Scripture ſtil'd, One of the *Sons of Belial*; and ſome, like him, are ſo Peeviſh and Froward, that *a Man can hardly Speak to them*; ſuch were the Phariſees of Old, of whom 'tis obſerv'd, That they were ſullen, formal, and moroſe, unfit for Society, and uneaſie to all that Convers'd with them; and too like them, are many in our Days, who, though pretending to higher Flights in Religion, do yet fall ſhort of good Manners, being of ſuch teſty and troubleſome Tempers, that 'tis hard to Pleaſe, and harder to live Peaceably and Quietly by them. Now *Charity* corrects this Roughneſs and Sourneſs of Temper, and puts a Sweetneſs and Benignity into our Nature, which makes all Men eaſie and converſable, and thereby keeps them from behaving themſelves Unſeemly to any of their Equals. In a word, this Grace reſtrains Men from all Cruelty and Oppreſſion; from all Falſehood and Injuſtice; and from uſing any rudely or reproachfully in Words or Geſtures, and conſequently, by avoiding all theſe Indecencies and Irregularities, it *doth not behave itſelf Unſeemly* in any Station or Capacity.

Thus having explain'd this Property of *Charity*, nothing remains, but to perſwade you to the Practice of it: let us then all weigh the ſundry Ranks and Stations in which we ſtand to one another, and labour to diſcharge the proper and reſpective Duties belonging to each. In the

Firſt place, Let *us know them that are over us in the Lord*, paying them all that Homage and Subjection, that is due to their higher Station, honouring their Perſons, obeying their Laws, and giving that due Deference to their Judgments, which their Authority may juſtly challenge: To this we have many Precepts in ſacred Writ, which are all ſumm'd up in the Words of our Church, *to behave our ſelves Lowly and Reverently to all our Betters.* In the

Next place, Let us know them that are under us, to oblige and pay them all the good Offices of Kindneſs and Condeſcention; And Laſtly, To all Men let us ſhew that Juſtice, Candor and Affability, that the ſeveral Ranks and Relations we ſtand in to each other require; So ſhall we learn this piece of *Charity*, that teaches us not to *behave our ſelves Unſeemly.* To perſwade you hereunto, know, *Firſt*,

Firſt, That a faithful and decent Diſcharge of your reſpective Duties will win you the Love and Liking of Mankind; for all Men are ſo juſt to Vertue, as to give it Reſpect where-ever they find it: good Men love it for its own ſake; and bad Men will praiſe, tho' they do not practice it: There are Charms in Goodneſs that draw the Affections, and all Men are honour'd for a civil Carriage; thus to oblige, and do good, is to live the Life of God, and to imitate the Pattern of his Perfections, and what can add a better Luſtre to our Nature, or put a greater Glory into our Actions, than to be, and do like our Maker?

Secondly, The faithful Diſcharge of our reſpective Duties, is the beſt Way of promoting both the publick and private Good: Obedience to Laws, is not only the Prince's Strength, but the Subject's Safety; and he that weakens the Superior's Power, weakens his own Security; to do good to others, is to be Benefactors to our ſelves, and to make Friends of the unrighteous Mammon; for every one may take their Turns of asking and receiving another's Bounty: to be kind and helpful to others, is to ſerve and profit our ſelves, and an affable obliging Behaviour lays the Foundation of our own Security. 3*ly*,

Thirdly, This comely and chriſtian Deportment, brings Eaſe and Pleaſure to thoſe that practice it: to perform the ſeveral Duties of our Station is accompanied with Delight and Satisfaction; but the Neglect of them occaſions great Perplexity and Trouble; the honeſt and humble Mind finds Eaſe and Content, when the conſcious and guilty Soul, like the troubled Sea, cannot reſt: By Submiſſion to Superiors, we eaſe our ſelves of all the chargable Miſeries and Expences of Rebellion: By Acts of Juſtice and Honeſty, we are free'd from all the Dangers that attend Fraud, and Falſhood; and by Acts of Kindneſs and *Charity*, we attract the Love and Favour of Mankind, to help in all Extremities. But,

Above all, the unſpeakable Reward that attend theſe Actions in a future State, afford a much higher Encouragement to the Practice of them; for theſe Things being ſuitable to our beſt Reaſon, are not only pleaſing in the Eyes of Men, but being done in Obedience to the Divine Laws, are much more acceptable in the Eyes of God; and as they ſeldom fail of a Reward here, ſo will they aſſuredly find a far greater hereafter; they ſerve to fit us now for the Heavenly State,

State, and will not fail at the laſt, to admit us to it. Wherefore,

Laſtly, Let us be ever mindful of theſe Acts of *Charity*, that will preſerve us from all unſeemly Behaviour; whatever Part we act on the Stage of this World, let us do it with all the Grace and Comlineſs we can; to which end chuſe the beſt Company, but be civil and uſeful to the worſt: let your Diſcourſe be not magiſterial, but modeſt, for that will give a Luſtre to Truth, and help to excuſe your Errors; and let all your Behaviour (as one well adviſes) be like your Garments, not too Strait or Looſe, but always Fit and Becoming.

Finally Brethren, whatſoever Things are True, whatſoever Things are Honeſt, whatſoever Things are Juſt, whatſoever Things are Pure, whatſoever Things are Lovely, whatſoever Things are of good Report, if there be any Vertue, if there be any Praiſe, think on theſe things: And let us ſo think of them as to frame our Lives and Actions according to them, ſo ſhall they adorn and recommend our Lives here, and at laſt bring us to Life Everlaſting; which God grant, *&c.*

The PROPERTIES OF CHARITY.

It ſeeketh not her own.

1 Cor. XIII. 5.

Charity *ſeeketh not her own.*

I Diſcours'd in my laſt, of the decent Deportment, that *Charity* requires towards all Men, together with that Unſeemly Behaviour, it forbids to be us'd towards any: I come now to another Property of this Virtue, contain'd in theſe Words, *Charity ſeeketh not her own:* in the Original it is ἡ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς, which implies ſuch an immoderate Fondneſs of our Selves, and our own Affairs, as excludes all due and decent Regard to the Concerns of others; for the fuller Explanation whereof, I muſt enquire, *Firſt,*

First, Whether *Charity* forbids all Self-seeking? If not,

Secondly, What Self-seeking it is that is condemn'd by it?

Thirdly, How, and wherein we are to consult the Good of Others, with, before, or above our Own?

First then, Does *Charity* condemn all Self-seeking? No, in no wise; 'tis an old and true Saying, That *Charity* begins at Home, and is so far from forbidding us to seek our own, that it requires us in the first place to mind our own Concerns: *Charity* does not abandon Men to Idleness, nor will them to cast off all Care, and Concern, for their own Business; for he that is not good to Himself, will be good to No-body else; and he that seeks not his own, will be unable to help himself or others; and therefore the Apostle wills all Christians, *Not to be slothful but diligent in their own Business*, without medling with other Men's Matters, as the best way to provide for their own Welfare and others Quiet: And elsewhere adds, that *He that provideth not for his own* (which cannot be without seeking it) *hath deny'd the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.* But does not the Apostle give it in Charge, *Let no Man seek*

1 Ti. 5. 8.

1 Cor. 10. 24.

seek his own, but every Man anothers Wealth? and likewise make it a Matter of Complaint, *That all Men seek their own, and few the things of others.* Yes, but neither of those places condemn a provident and diligent Care for our Selves and Family; for the same Apostle frequently presses That, and makes it the Mark of an Apostate and Infidel to do otherwise; Our blessed Saviour, in willing us to *Love our Neighbour as our Selves*, implies that we are to love our Selves in the first place, and then to make that the Rule and Standard for our loving of others: yea, Nature it self teaches thus much; for every one being neareſt to Himself, is first and principally concern'd, to mind and seek his own Welfare. So that all kind of Self-seeking is so far from being inconsistent with *Charity*, that 'twould be not only Uncharitable, but Unnatural to neglect it.

Phil. 2. 20, 21.

Secondly then, What is that Self-seeking that is opposite to *Charity*? In general it is that narrow, stingy and contracted Spirit, that confines the Offices of Kindness wholly to it self, and casts off all Care and Concern for others. There are some who regard not how it fares with others, so themselves can but live in Ease

and

and Plenty; and if they can eſcape any Evil or Danger, care not who elſe falls into it; Theſe are thoſe *Lovers of their own ſelves*, mention'd by the Apoſtle 2 *Tim.* 3. 2. whom he after marks with the Brand of Covetouſneſs, which like the inſatiable Gulph, greedily ſucks in all to it ſelf; and in the next Verſe notes them for Perſons without *natural Affection*, whoſe Bowels are contracted, and thereby have no Senſe or Feeling of any but themſelves; yea, they are ſo far from loving others, though better than themſelves, that the Apoſtle farther adds, that they are *Deſpiſers of thoſe who are good*: They wrap themſelves up in their own ſoft belov'd Intereſt, and deride thoſe for ſilly Sheep, who bear Fleece's for any other end, than to keep themſelves warm: But to ſpeak more particularly.

Firſt, To prefer the private Intereſt before, or above the publick, is an inordinate Self-ſeeking; for we are not born for our ſelves, but chiefly for our Friends and Country, and are made Members of Society to promote the publick Good. This is indeed ſo neceſſary, that we our ſelves cannot ſubſiſt without it; we cannot be ſafe without the Protection of Superiors; we cannot live without the Labour

bour of Inferiors; and we ſhould be both miſchievious and miſerable without the mutual Aid, Comfort, and Aſſiſtance of one another: ſo that our chiefeſt Aim, muſt be at the common Good of the whole, by which the Welfare of every part is alone preſerv'd; we find even inanimate Creatures are inclin'd ſometimes to leave their own natural Courſe for the Good of the Univerſe; the Water, though a heavy Body, will aſcend; and the Air forgetting its own Lightneſs, will deſcend to prevent a Breach in Nature; how much more then ſhould Man, who is endow'd with nobler Faculties, make his own private Intereſt and Inclinations ſtoop to the publick Welfare? And yet there are but too many who invert this Order, and make the publick Intereſt truckle and ſerve their private Advantage; their Actions have a falſe Bias, that leads only to themſelves, and draws the publick Revenue into private Pockets, which is to divert a common Stream, that ſhould ſerve many, into a ſingle Ciſtern: this is too frequently done in the bad Servants, Officers, and Counſellors of Princes, who warp and bend all Affairs that paſs through their hands, to their own Ends, to the great Damage many times,

times, both of their Masters, and the Publick; and sometimes in lower Stations, this Corruption is too visible.

Now, this is most directly contrary to this Grace of *Charity*, which *seeketh not its own*, for this will make Men spend themselves for the Good and Benefit of others, and prefer the Good of many before one, though it be a Man's single and beloved Self.

Secondly, To do, or suffer any Evil to be done to another, to compass our own Ends, is an inordinate Self-seeking; for this is to set a Neighbour's House on fire to roast our own Eggs; and yet this is too common among Men, who seek to raise themselves by the Fall and Ruin of others: And to arrive at their Ends, will not stick at the Lives, Livelihood, or Reputation of any that stand in their way; this is Self-seeking with a witness, and is so far from *Charity*, that 'tis contrary to Nature, and right Reason, and *their Damnation is Just, who will venture to do evil to others, that good may come to themselves.*

Thirdly, To refuse to do good to others because we reap no benefit by it our selves, is a sinful Self-seeking; this was the way of the Pharisees, who would do good

good to none, unleſs they might receive ſome good by it themſelves: they would ſalute only their own Brethren, and beſtow their Benefits no where, but where they might reap them again with ſome Advantage; which is too frequent likewiſe, in the Practice of ſome in our Days; this Mercenary and Selfiſh Love, we find ſharply rebuk'd by our Bleſſed Saviour *Mat.* 5. 46, 47. *If you love them that love you, what reward have you, do not even the Publicans the ſame? and if you do good to them only, that do good to you, what do you more than others? do not even the Publicans ſo?* whereas *Charity* ſeeketh not its own Profit in what it doth, but is willing to do good to others, tho' it thereby receive not the leaſt Advantage to it ſelf; 'tis content with the preſent Pleaſure of Well-doing, and the future Reward annex'd to it, which make it ready to all good Works, and even to ſeek out Opportunities of exerciſing them: yea, ſo far ought we to be from projecting Gain in our good Works, that we are to be kind to the Poor and Indigent, that cannot make any Requital; and likewiſe to the Evil, and Unthankful, who will not; for *Charity* teaches to give, *not hoping to receive again*; yea, with our Saviour, *to do*

good

good to thoſe, who make no other return but evil.

Fourthly, To prefer a leſſer Good to our ſelves, before a greater Good to another, is a degree of this inordinate Self-ſeeking; thus, he that refuſes to ſpare a little to ſave the Life, Health or Goods of his Neighbour, is immoderately fond of Himſelf, and bears no love or Regard to another: whereas *Charity* will not ſo far conſult its own Eaſe, Profit or Pleaſure, as to be at no pains or coſt to promote another's Welfare. The good Samaritan's being at ſome Trouble and Charge for the Safety of the wounded Traveller, is recorded with Honour in ſacred Writ; to which our Saviour adds this advice, *Go thou, and do likewiſe*; and in this Senſe it is that the Apoſtle directed, *let no man ſeek his own, but every man anothers Wealth*; yea, *Chriſtian Charity* (as a learned Divine hath told us,) obliges to purſue the Benefit and Edification of others, tho' it be with ſome Loſs to our ſelves; and teaches us willingly to ſuffer a little Detriment, rather than omit a fair Occaſion of doing a greater Good; this is the Meaning of the Apoſtle when he bids us, *not to pleaſe our ſelves, but rather to pleaſe our Neighbour for his*

Luk 10. 37.

1 Cor. 10. 24.

Rom. 15. 12.

his Edification; which is but a ſlender Imitation of our Bleſſed Saviour's Example, who ſo far deny'd himſelf, as to lay down his Life for the Good of Mankind.

Thus having ſeen what this Self-ſeeking is, which is ſo contrary to *Charity, that ſeeketh not its own*, I proceed in the next place to ſhew, the great Evil of it. And,

Firſt, This inordinate Self-ſeeking hath a very bad Influence on the publick Welfare; for where this reigns, no Prince can be ſafe, nor any People ſecure: for this will violate all Duty and Obligations to both; he that is immoderately addicted to his own Intereſt, and prefers his private Gain, before the publick Good, will ſtick at no Oaths, Promiſes, or Contracts, but will break all thoſe Bonds aſunder, and caſt away the Cords of Religion from them.

This is the Cauſe of all the Deceit, Diſ-honeſty, and Breach of Truſt that is found in the World; yea, all publick Commotions and Breach of the Peace, ſpring from this bitter Root of Self-love: *from whence comes Wars and Fighting among you*, (ſaith the Apoſtle) *come they not hence, even from their Luſts?* that is, from an inordi-

inordinate Desire of the Profits and Pleasures of this Life; 'tis this, as the Apostle tells us, that makes the last Days perilous and troublesome, *for Men shall be Lovers of themselves.* This begets Divisions in the Church, and Troubles in the State; it occasions Perjuries in Courts of Justice, Fraud in the Shop, and Injustice every where; it makes many intrude into Offices, not to do Good, but to enrich themselves from the Spoils of others, and raise their Fortunes, upon the Ruins of their Country. Now *Charity*, that *seeketh not its own*, cures, and prevents all these Evils; for That (as a great Man observes) violates no Compacts, raiseth no Commotions, invades no Man's Property, interrupts no Man's Peace, assaults no Man's Person, it grinds no poor Man's Face, nor takes any Ew-lamb out of his Bosom; it envies no Man's Greatness, nor seeks to supplant any; but contrary wise, does all the Good it can to all Men, and never thinks of Evil, but to prevent and suppress it. 2 Tim. 3. 1, 2.

Secondly, This Self-seeking, is not only pernicious to the publick, but likewise to the private Good of those in whom it reigns; for since every Man's private Welfare is bound up, and included in the pub-

his Edification; which is but a ſlender Imitation of our Bleſſed Saviour's Example, who ſo far deny'd himſelf, as to lay down his Life for the Good of Mankind.

Thus having ſeen what this Self-ſeeking is, which is ſo contrary to *Charity, that ſeeketh not its own*, I proceed in the next place to ſhew, the great Evil of it. And,

Firſt, This inordinate Self-ſeeking hath a very bad Influence on the publick Welfare; for where this reigns, no Prince can be ſafe, nor any People ſecure: for this will violate all Duty and Obligations to both; he that is immoderately addicted to his own Intereſt, and prefers his private Gain, before the publick Good, will ſtick at no Oaths, Promiſes, or Contracts, but will break all thoſe Bonds aſunder, and caſt away the Cords of Religion from them.

This is the Cauſe of all the Deceit, Diſ-honeſty, and Breach of Truſt that is found in the World; yea, all publick Commotions and Breach of the Peace, ſpring from this bitter Root of Self-love: *from whence comes Wars and Fighting among you*, (ſaith the Apoſtle) *come they not hence, even from their Luſts?* that is, from an inordi-

inordinate Deſire of the Profits and Pleaſures of this Life; 'tis this, as the Apoſtle tells us, that makes the laſt Days perilous and troubleſome, *for Men ſhall be Lovers of themſelves.* This begets Diviſions in the Church, and Troubles in the State; it occaſions Perjuries in Courts of Juſtice, Fraud in the Shop, and Injuſtice every where; it makes many intrude into Offices, not to do Good, but to enrich themſelves from the Spoils of others, and raiſe their Fortunes, upon the Ruins of their Country. Now *Charity*, that *ſeeketh not its own*, cures, and prevents all theſe Evils; for That (as a great Man obſerves) violates no Compacts, raiſeth no Commotions, invades no Man's Property, interrupts no Man's Peace, aſſaults no Man's Perſon, it grinds no poor Man's Face, nor takes any Ew-lamb out of his Boſom; it envies no Man's Greatneſs, nor ſeeks to ſupplant any; but contrary wiſe, does all the Good it can to all Men, and never thinks of Evil, but to prevent and ſuppreſs it. 2 Tim. 3. 1, 2.

Secondly, This Self-ſeeking, is not only pernicious to the publick, but likewiſe to the private Good of thoſe in whom it reigns; for ſince every Man's private Welfare is bound up, and included in the pub-

lick, they muſt ſtand or fall together, it being impoſſible to impair the one, without undermining the other; he that makes or refuſes to ſtop a Leak in a Ship, contributes to his own Shipwrack, and 'twill be in vain to hope, that his ſingle Cabin ſhould ſwim, when the whole Veſſel ſinks. So that this is a very fooliſh Vice, for it fires its own Neſt, in ſeeking to ſave it; and deſtroys the private, by weakening the publick Safety; and it hath been frequently obſerv'd, that They who have all their time ſacrific'd to themſelves, have in the end, become Sacrifices themſelves to the publick Welfare. Wherefore,

From what hath been ſaid, let us learn to baniſh this narrow, ſelfiſh, and contracted Spirit, which ſhuts up Men in their own hard, rough, and private Shells, and makes them, like *Ephraim*, to bring forth Fruit only to themſelves; 'tis a poor Center of a Man's Actions, *himſelf*; which (as a wiſe Man tells us) is right Earth, for that only ſtands faſt upon its own Center, whereas all things that have Affinity with the Heavens, move upon the Center of another, which they ſeek to benefit.

'Tis indeed a matter of too great and

juſt

juſt Complaint, that the publick Spirit of our Anceſtors, ſo eminent in former times, ſhould be ſo deplorably loſt in ours; in which we may ſay with St. *Paul*, *All Men ſeek their own, and None the things of Jeſus Chriſt*, which are the publick Intereſts of Chriſt's Church, and the Matters belonging to our civil Peace; theſe are too much laid aſide, and ſacrific'd to the private Intereſts of particular Perſons and Parties; whoſe Deſigns we ſhall do well not only to diſcover, but to prevent and avoid. And this we cannot better do, than by learning and practiſing this excellent Grace of *Charity* which *ſeeketh not her own*, but enlarges the Heart to a due Love and Care of others; the primitive Chriſtians were very remarkable for this, and 'twere well, if we would more ſtudy and retrieve this ancient Spirit of Chriſtianity.

The regaining this Spirit is a Matter, that not only deſerves, but needs our utmoſt Care; it very well deſerves our Care, becauſe it makes us like unto God, who takes Care of All, and is concern'd for all his Creatures; beſide, he hath link'd us into publick Bodies and Societies, in which there is a mutual Need and Dependance on each other, to ſub-

due this Selfish Spirit, and engage us in the Concerns of one another; and if the Air, Earth, Water, and other inferiour Creatures, contribute so much to the common Good, how much more ought Man, who is endow'd with nobler Faculties, to direct both himself and them to those publick Ends?

And as the regaining this publick Spirit deserves, so does it highly need our utmost Care; for the Love of this World is apt to insinuate it self so deep into our Affections, and the Care of our selves, to take such fast Hold of us, as not to permit us to look any farther; we are naturally prone to dote too much upon our selves, and the Fondness we have of our own beloved Interest, makes us easily over-look the Wants and Necessities of others; and therefore, we are concern'd narrowly to watch our own Hearts, lest they run too far into Self-love, and betray us into a fond Partiality.

To prevent which, let us endeavour to be rooted and grounded in Love; First, and Chiefly, in the Love of God, who gives us all things freely to enjoy; and in Subordination to Him, in Love to our Selves and Brethren, whom we are to love for his Sake; by extending our good

Works

Works to them we ſhall now *ſow to the Spirit*, and ſhall hereafter reap plentifully for it when the Harveſt comes; that is, when the rewards of *Charity* ſhall be given abroad, as they will aſſuredly be in the next World, we ſhall be liberally rewarded for all the Good we have done in this: To provide for our ſelves only, and to make *Proviſion for the Fleſh, to fulfil the Luſts thereof*, is only to ſow to the Fleſh, and ſo is all that which is ſpent in goodly Houſes, fine Cloathes, and a plentiful Table, and the like; and the Apoſtle tells us, that thoſe that *thus ſow to the Fleſh, ſhall of the Fleſh reap Corruption*, that is, nothing of theſe things will remain or go along with us; the Remembrance of them can bring neither Profit nor Pleaſure to us, and from this ſowing we ſhall reap nothing but Corruption and Loſs; whereas the Fruits of *Charity* that *ſeeketh not its own*, but the Good of others, are preſent Peace, and in the end everlaſting Life.

The PROPERTIES OF *CHARITY*: *It is not easily Povoked.*

1 Cor. XIII. 5.

Charity *is not easily Provoked.*

HAVING explain'd that excellent Property of *Charity*, that baniſhes all Self-Love, and teaches us to cheriſh a due regard to others, I proceed now to the next Branch of it, which ſuppreſſeth all immoderate Anger, and teaches the Virtue of Meekneſs, and that is expreſs'd in theſe Words; *Charity is not easily Provoked.* In the Original it is ὐ παροξύνεται, which properly ſignifies, not ſo much being eaſily, as being highly Provoked: For, as the Paroxyſm of a Fever,

Fever, signifies not the Easiness of falling into, but the Height and Intenseness of the Distemper, so παροξυνεται, the same Word, here betokens not being too easily, but being too highly Provoked.

It differs from Long-Suffering, mention'd as the first Act of *Charity*, in this, that That suppresseth all Rashness and Suddenness of Anger, which is *to Suffer long*, this restraineth all Inordinancy and Excess of it, which is, not to be highly Provoked; and therefore to distinguish this from the former, it were more properly translated, not by *Charity's* being not easily, but not highly Provoked; so that this is that Act of *Charity* that checks the Excess, and keeps the Mean and due Moderation in the Passion of Anger. In treating therefore hereof, I must enquire,

First, What are those Excesses of Anger, that *Charity* here restrains.

Secondly, What is that Virtue of Meekness, that this Branch of it here requires; and *Lastly*, Recommend to you, this Property of *Charity*. But before I enter upon this Subject, 'twill be requisite to premise this one thing, *viz.*

That Anger, together with the other

Paſſions of Love, Joy, Hope, Fear, and the like, are in themſelves, not only innocent, but uſeful, and ſerve to many excellent Purpoſes; for theſe being planted in us by God Himſelf, the Author of our Being, muſt (as his other Works) be in themſelves very good, and, if rightly us'd, are the chief Inſtruments, and Ornaments of the Soul; The Apoſtle bids us, *be angry and ſin not*; which implies that we may be Angry without Sin; yea, being made a Duty, it would in ſome Caſes be a Sin not to be ſo: we read frequently in Scripture, of God's Anger, Diſpleaſure, and Indignation againſt Sin and Sinners; which ſhews this rather to be a Perfection, than Perturbation of the Mind; and when we are Angry for a juſt Cauſe, we imitate and reſemble our Maker, and Act, not only as he does, but as he would have us: ſo that *Charity* does not root out, but only regulate this Paſſion of Anger, and wills us not to be too eaſily, or too highly Provoked.

Eph 4.26.

What then are the Exceſſes of this Paſſion, which *Charity* helps to regulate? In Anſwer to which, Anger may be ſinful and inordinate chiefly in theſe three Caſes:

Firſt, When 'tis Cauſeleſs, or conceiv'd without ſufficient Ground. *Se-*

Secondly, When 'tis extravagant, and exceeds its due Bounds.

Thirdly, When 'tis lasting, or continues too long with us. These are the common Irregularities of this Passion, which *Charity* is said to rectify, and therefore must be particularly consider'd.

First, I say, Anger is inordinate when 'tis causeless, and fallen into without any or sufficient Grounds; the Will and the Affections, are the blind Passions of the Mind, which, without a Guide to direct them, are too apt to miss their Way; and therefore our wise Maker, hath committed them to the Conduct of the Understanding, which is the Eye of the Soul, and subjected them to Reason, the leading Faculty of it; so that whilst they yield to this, and are govern'd by the Dictates of right Reason, they still go aright; but when they leave their Guide, and follow their own Sway, they naturally run into great Inordinancies. Hence it comes to pass, that some are Angry without any Cause, which is the common Effect of Peevishness; others for slight and trivial Matters, which proceeds from the Perverseness of their Natures: And too many by letting loose the Reins

to

to this unbridled Paſſion, ſuffer it to run aſtray, into great Diſorders.

Now, the Grace of *Charity* curbs and reſtrains this Paſſion, and keeps it from breaking out into any unjuſt, and cauſeleſs Anger: particularly it checks that Raſhneſs, and Haſtineſs of Spirit, to which Cholerick Perſons are more eſpecially inclin'd; it corrects that Frowardneſs of Temper, and takes off that Teſtineſs of Humour, that makes them diſpleas'd at every thing, and oftentimes Angry, they know not why, as was ſhew'd under the firſt Branch of it.

Secondly, Anger is ſinful, when 'tis extravagant, and exceeds the due Bounds: there may be, and often is, juſt Occaſion of Anger, as in Matters wherein the Glory of God, our Own, or our Neighbour's Welfare is concern'd, or endan-
2 Pet. 2. 8. ger'd; *Lot's Righteous Soul was vexed at the filthy Converſation of the Wicked: Moſes, the meekeſt Man upon Earth*, was extreamly incens'd at the Idolatry of the Iſraelites, *in making and worſhipping a mol-*
Ex. 32. 19. *ten Calf. David, a Man after God's own Heart*, was *Angry at the Tranſgreſſions of Sinners.* Yea, we find the meek and holy *Jeſus*, highly diſpleas'd at the *Prophaners of the Temple*, ſcourging out thoſe

Huckſters

Huckſters thence, that turned *the Houſe of Prayer into a Den of Thieves.* And there are daily too many Occaſions of Anger, and ſuch too, as may not only juſtify, but require a Paſſion. But yet even in theſe things, wherein a juſt and great Cauſe of Anger is adminiſtred, great Care muſt be taken, that we ſuffer it not to grow exorbitant, or run beyond the due Bounds, but keep this unruly Paſſion within its proper Limits, and Meaſures. Mark. 11. 17.

But, What are thoſe due Bounds and Meaſures, which we are not to ſuffer them to exceed? why, I obſerved before, that the Paſſions of the Mind being blind, are by God-Almighty committed to the conduct of Reaſon, which is a Light ſet up in the Soul to guide and direct them; and where this is too dimm, 'tis help'd out by the brighter Light of Religion and Revelation for our farther Direction: So that Reaſon and Religion, are the Bounds ſet to our Paſſions; and when they go beſide or beyond theſe, they become inordinate, and fall into blind Rage and Fury; when we ſuffer our Paſſions to dethrone our Reaſon, and hinder the free Uſe and Exerciſe of our Underſtandings, when they drive us on headlong, and (as one expreſſeth it) *the Beaſt rides the Man*, when

when our Paſſion is got into the Chair, and makes us do we know not what, ſo blinding us with Rage, that we know no Difference between Friend or Foe, Right or Wrong, and hurrying us on to the Commiſſion of ſuch things for which we are ſorry, and repent after, then is our Anger extravagant and exceeds its proper Bounds.

In ſhort, when our Paſſions ſo far tranſport, as to unfit us for the Service of God; when they hinder the Duties of our Calling, and betray us into ſuch raſh and fooliſh Actions, as bring on nothing but Shame, and Repentance, then are they immoderate, and we become *too highly Provok'd.*

Now *Charity* ἐ παροξύνεται, that is, ſecures us from theſe Paroxyſms of Anger; it will not ſuffer it to grow to this Head, whereby it ſhould injure our ſelves, or offend others, but reſtrains it within the Bounds of Reaſon and Religion; it keeps it from breaking out into Fury, which is a ſhort Madneſs, and ſets a Man for the time, beſides himſelf; and therefore the Apoſtle exhorts, *in Patience to poſſeſs our Souls*; as if a Man out of Patience had loſt the Poſſeſſion of his Soul, *Animamque in vulnere ponit*: For which Reaſon, we

are

are bid *to lay aside all Anger and Bitterness, with all Malice*, Eph. 4. last Verse.

Thirdly, Anger is Sinful when it lasts too long, and dwells in the Breast that harbours it; for this is to be admitted only as a Guest, but not to be entertain'd as an Inhabitant; too long a Stay may give it Possession, and make it very difficult to be remov'd. Anger therefore, must not remain after the Acknowledgment and Repentance of the offending Party; for that which we expect should turn away God's Anger from us, ought in Reason, to turn away ours from our Brother; it must not continue after Satisfaction made or offer'd; for that takes away the Cause of Anger, and the Fuel being remov'd, the Fire must go out: Much less is it to abide after the Punishment of the Offender; for that betokens an evil Mind, that seeks farther Revenge than is due to the Measure of the Offence, and turns an innocent Resentment, into Malignity and Malice: and therefore we find the Apostle, after he had bid us to *be Angry and Sin not*, immediately subjoining, *let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath, neither give place to the Devil*; meaning, that we should not keep our Anger too long, if we mean to keep it innocent; Eph. 4 27

innocent, and if we keep it beyond the due time, we harbour a Foe, and *give place to the Devil.* The Apoſtle by mentioning the *going down of the Sun,* for the laying aſide Wrath, hath fix'd the longeſt term of its Continuance, to wit, that the Heat of our Fury, ſhould paſs away before the Evening; becauſe of the Approach of our Evening-Devotion, which requires a ſedate and compos'd Mind, when we are going to ask Forgiveneſs of God for our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive thoſe that Treſpaſs againſt us. This brings to mind a certain Story of two Friends, who, happening in Company to fall at Variance, parted from each other in great Wrath; but it ſo fell out, that one of them, towards the Evening, calling to Mind thoſe Words of the Apoſtle, *Let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath,* was thereby mov'd to ſeek Reconciliation, and to that End ſent to his Friend, to let him know that the Sun was going down, which Meſſage made him conſider likewiſe the ſame Advice of the Apoſtle, and had the ſame Effect to incline him to a Reconciliation; upon which they met again and agreed to lay aſide their Anger on both ſides, and thenceforth enter'd into an intire and inviolable

Friend-

Friendship: this was a noble Effect of Christian Charity, and should teach us to go and do likewise. And this will lead me,

Secondly, To consider the Virtue of Meekness, which is that Branch of *Charity*, that helps us to keep a due Mean and Moderation in this Passion of Anger; to which end it teaches,

First, Not to fall into it without Cause, or upon any slight and trivial Occasion; like him, who in an eager Pursuit of Butterflies, was displeas'd and disorder'd, because he could not catch them; or like him, who was angry with the Husbandman for not Ploughing Mathematically, and striking the Furrows in a Right-line, and could not be appeas'd till he was told the little difference between *errare* and *arare*, and that the fault of the Furrows would prove no loss at the Harvest. Moreover, Meekness places the Passion on the right Object, to wit, not on the Persons, but Vices of Men, evermore loving the one, even when 'tis displeas'd with the other.

Lastly, This Virtue of Meekness will so calm the Spirits, and moderate the Passions, that they shall not lead them into Violence or Revenge; for though there may

may be ſometimes juſt Cauſe of Anger, yet it muſt not riſe higher than the Matter that occaſions it, deſerves; as we may not be Angry without a Cauſe, ſo neither muſt the Paſſion go beyond it; for all Anger is ſo far cauſeleſs, as it exceeds the Provocation. And as Meekneſs keeps our Paſſions within the Merits of the Cauſe, ſo does it within the Bounds of Sobriety and Prudence; for all that is beyond that, is but Phrenzy and Madneſs, as is evident by thoſe Antick and abſurd Actions, which the Exceſs of Paſſion leads Men to: how it puts them out of their own Power, and makes them do thoſe things, which in their ſober Moods, they abhor; yea, it gives ſome Men the Rage and Fierceneſs of wild Beaſts, inclining them to all kinds of Miſchief; for which reaſon Wiſe Men ſhun them, as they do the moſt ſavage Creatures: whereas this Virtue of Meekneſs preſerves the Uſe of our Reaſon, makes us act like Men, and keeps us from the Rage and Impatiencies of Anger.

Thus I have explain'd to you, that *Property* of *Charity*, that reſtrains the Exorbitance of our Paſſion, and keeps us from being too eaſily or too highly Provok'd: Which I muſt therefore in the laſt

last Place recommend to the Care and Practice of all Christians, to which end consider,

First, The many and great Advantages of this Virtue; it makes us easie to our selves and others, and gives us the Enjoyment of what we have, which the angry and impatient Man hath not; for which Reason, our Saviour pronounced the *Meek*, *Blessed*, *for they shall inherit the Earth*, Mat. 5. 5. it keeps us safe and quiet here below, and likewise fits us for the Regions above.

But beside the Pleasure, there is a great deal of Honour that attends this Virtue; it makes us like unto Christ, who hath bid us *learn of him to be meek and lowly in Heart*, Mat. 11. 28. 'tis a nobler Victory to conquer our Passions than to be master'd by them; *he that subdues his own Spirit is greater than he that taketh a City.* Prov. 16. 32.

Secondly, Consider the many bad Effects of Anger and Impatience; how it disquiets a Man's self, and troubles all that are about him, for which Reason 'tis stil'd the Disease and Weakness of the Soul, that keeps it sore and uneasy, *Anger* (saith Solomon) *resteth in the Bosom of Fools*, and does but fret and gall the

Breaſt that harbours it; yea, a Great Man hath ſtil'd it, not only the Weakneſs, but the Baſeneſs of the Mind, as appears by the Subjects in whom it reigns, as Children, Women, Old, and Sick Perſons, who are moſt liable to the Impreſſions of Anger.

And therefore, to prevent the many ſad Effects of this Evil, let us often obſerve how ill it looks in Others, and likewiſe, look back upon it in our Selves, when the Fit is throughly over; both which will ſhew us the Folly and Danger of it: for we never act ſo much below our ſelves, as when we ſuffer our Paſſion to be above us: and Wiſdom always goeth out when Paſſion enters in. Moreover, To cure this Evil, let us not be too ſenſible of Hurt; for no Man is Angry that does not feel himſelf ſome way or other hurt, and therefore nice, tender, and delicate Perſons, are often and ſoon Angry: for they have many things to trouble them, which more robuſt Natures have little Senſe of; eſpecially let us not be too ſenſible of Contempt, for that puts the Sting into Paſſion, and ſharpens Anger; they that would kindle it in the Breaſt of any, commonly pick out and aggravate all the Circumſtances of

Con-

Contempt; and they that quench it, sever these from the Fact, and impute it to any Thing rather than Contempt, and therefore we should have a firmer Sense of Honour, than to think it wounded by every slight Reproach, or to fear our Reputation so weak as to break with every Crack.

Furthermore, To remedy this Evil, consider how much better it is to Pardon little Injuries, than to be highly Provok'd by them; Experience shews us, that few Inconveniencies follow the patient Bearing of such Wrongs; but many and great Troubles attend the Revenging of them. He that is mov'd to Wrath upon any slight Oversight, or Indiscretion of his Neighbour, betrays great Weakness, but we shew our selves greater than they, when we let the World see that they cannot trouble us. To revenge an Injury, is to act the Part of an Executioner; but to remit it, is to personate a Prince; for 'tis the Prerogative of Kings to Pardon. We do an Adversary too much Honour, to take Notice, or be Concern'd for his Follies; to despise them is an Act of Wisdom and Courage, but to resent them so as to revenge them, betrays Cowardice, and a Fear of what he may farther do to us.

He who yields to his Paſſions, is a Slave to the greateſt Tyrants; but he who commands himſelf, is above the Empire of the World; and therefore to ſhew our ſelves Men, let us ſhew our ſelves Chriſtians, and prefer *Charity* and Meekneſs above all weak and puſilanimous Paſſion: To which end, Let us ſtifle the Beginnings of Anger; to Quench a Spark is the way to prevent a Flame; to mortify the natural Frowardneſs and Peeviſhneſs of Spirit, is to damm up the Fountain, and check the firſt Motions; to ſeal up our Ears and Lips from hearing or uttering bitter Speeches, is to withdraw the Fuel, and let the Fire go out.

But above all, Let us be ever mindful of the Example of our Bleſſed Saviour, who hath given us the higheſt Pattern of Patience and *Charity*, in Pardoning and Praying for his greateſt Enemies; and left it in Charge with all Chriſtians, that They ſhould learn of him to do likewiſe.

The PROPERTIES OF *CHARITY*: *It thinketh no Evil.*

1 Cor. XIII. 5.

Charity *thinketh no Evil.*

FROM that Act of *Charity*, that governs the Paſſions and Perturbations of the Mind, I proceed to the Next, which reſpects the Thoughts and Inclinations of the Heart, which this Virtue takes off from all Evil, and fixes only on that which is Good; this is held forth to us in theſe Words, *Charity thinketh no Evil*; it ſavours not of Evil, and leaves no Reliſh or Tincture of it upon the Mind.

The Words in the Original are ὐ λογίζεται

λογίζεται τὸ κακὸν, where λογίζεται signifies not only to think, but to design and contrive, and κακὸν denotes Evil, not only as 'tis taken for Sin, but as it implies Mischief, and all manner of Hurt to another; so that this is that Property of *Charity*, that restrains Men from doing any kind of Harm to their Neighbour; yea, it regulates the very Thoughts and Desires of the Heart towards them; and is so far from doing, that it *thinketh no Evil.* In treating therefore of these Words, I must,

First, Clear the Sense of them, and shew what is meant here, by *thinking no Evil.*

Secondly, I must confirm the Truth of them, and shew that *Charity* keeps Men, not only from doing, but thinking any Evil. And,

Lastly, Stir up to the Practice of this excellent Act of *Charity*. For the clearing the Sense of the Words we must note,

First, When *Charity* is said to think no Evil, we must not understand it of the bare thinking upon any thing that is evil; as if the apprehending, or considering what is Sinful, were inconsistent with *Charity*; for we cannot know what is Good, without thinking and comparing it with what is Evil: Neither can we

shun

ſhun or avoid Evil, without knowing, and conſidering it to be ſo; this, of it ſelf, doth no more pollute the Soul, than the beholding an ugly Object doth hurt the Sight; yea, the more we think upon, and view the Deformity of Sin, the better may we be preſerv'd from the Pollution of it.

As bad Men think ſometimes of what is Good, ſo good Men may, and ought ſometimes to think of what is Evil; not indeed to practice, but to abhor and avoid it. And as Almighty God *beholds both the Evil and the Good*, to puniſh the one, and to reward the other, ſo, ought we to think upon both, to hate the one, and love the other: ſo that all thinking of Evil is not to be thought contrary to *Charity*; for this requires us to think of it ſometimes, in order to the amending and turning from it; nor can we ask Pardon for, or reſolve againſt it, without thinking of it. Nor yet,

Secondly, Does *Charity* totally ſuppreſs the firſt Motions of Sin, or the ſudden riſing up of evil Thoughts before we are aware; theſe are the unavoidable Imbecilities of human Nature, and are ſo incident to it, in this preſent State, that we may not hope to be here totally free

from them; and where they are not voluntary, or consented to, will not be imputed to us. All that *Charity* teaches in such Cases, is, not to give way to them, but to check such sudden Thoughts in the beginning; not to receive them with Delight, but Detestation, to nip them in the Bud, and controul the first Motions, *How long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee*, saith the Prophet. 'Tis not the sudden starting of them up in our Minds, but their lodging and abiding with us, that is there reprov'd and charg'd as sinful. And when *Charity is said to think no Evil*, it implies that it does not willingly harbour evil Thoughts, or give entertainment to vile and mischievous Imaginations. But,

Jer. 4. 14.

Thirdly, When *Charity is said to think no Evil*, it is meant, that it does not impute any Sin or Evil to another without a cause, or rashly judge him, or think him an ill Man, for every Infirmity or slight Occasion; for λογίζεται, signifies to reckon, account, or impute any thing to another; and λογίζεται κακὸν here, is the same with λογίζεται ἁμαρτίαν elsewhere, to impute Sin or Unrighteousness to him: Now *Charity* ὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακὸν, does not easily impute Sin to his Neighbour, or charge him with

with any Evil: whatſoever Good he doth, it willingly aſcribes that to him for his Honour and Reward; but what is amiſs it unwillingly imputes to him to his Diſadvantage, much leſs does it think hardly of him, for any thing that may admit of any juſt Excuſe. Moreover, λογίζεται, is ſometimes taken for Reaſoning, or Arguing for any Thing or Perſon; and ſo *Charity's* ἡ λογίζεται κακὸν ſignifies, that it does not argue or plead for a bad Cauſe, or put fair Colours upon any foul Actions; It *does not call Evil Good, or Good Evil; or take Light for Darkneſs, or Darkneſs for Light; nor put Bitter for Sweet, or Sweet for Bitter*; againſt which a Woe is denounc'd *Iſai.* 5. 20. In ſhort, it will not juſtify the Wicked, nor condemn the Righteous, both which are an Abomination to the Lord; but on the contrary, *Charity* will take off the Thoughts from thinking or doing any Evil, and incline it to ſtudy and promote all manner of Good.

Again, *Charity* thinketh no Evil; that is, it is not Jealous or Suſpicious; it does not put the worſt Conſtructions upon others Actions, but takes every thing in the beſt Senſe, and thinks the beſt of others that it can: But this belongs more properly to thoſe Properties of *Charity* mention'd

mention'd in the following Verſe, where it ſhall be farther conſider'd.

Fourthly, Therefore, when *Charity* is here ſaid *to think no Evil*, the true and proper Senſe of it is, that it does not deſire, or deſign any Evil or Harm to any other; it doth not deſire any ones Death, nor ſtudy to do him Miſchief, but contrariwiſe, willeth and promoteth their Good as far as it may; ſo that this Property of *Charity* has ſomething Negative, and ſomething Poſitive; the one reſtrains from all Evil; the other prompts to all manner of Good.

The Negative part of *Charity* conſiſts, in not harbouring any Thoughts of Harm or Miſchief to our Neighbour: it does
Eccl. 10. 20. not ſuffer us to *Curſe the King, ſo much as in our Thoughts*, or to engage in any Plots or evil Deſigns againſt Him: Nay, it will not permit us to have any Head, Heart, or Hand, in any bad Deſigns or Projects againſt any Perſon: for *Love* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *worketh no ill to his Neighbour; therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law* (Rom. 13. 10.) yea, it not only reſtrains the outward Acts, but checks the inward Deſires and Motions towards it, keeping Men, not only from doing, but thinking of Evil.

Now

Now there are ſeveral ways of hurting our Neighbour, from all which the Grace of *Charity* is the beſt Preſervative. As,

Firſt, A Man may do Harm to his Neighbour's Soul, either by creating unneceſſary Grief and Trouble to it; or by drawing and enticing him into Sin, which is the greateſt Evil or Miſchief we can do him. *By ſorrow of Heart* (ſaith *Solomon*) *the Spirit is broken*; and therefore he that cauſeleſly Vexeth and Diſquieteth his Neighbour, or takes pleaſure in any Evil or Misfortune that betides him, wounds his Neighbour's Soul, and is void of all Affection towards him. Prov. 15. 13.

But the Wounds that Sin make in the Soul, are far more deſperate and incurable; for they expoſe it to the Wrath of God, and bring on eternal Deſtruction; *He that Sinneth againſt God* (ſaith the wiſe Man) *wrongeth his own Soul*, and he that draws another into it, wrongeth his Neighbour's Soul, and does him the worſt of Injuries. Now *Charity* prevents both theſe; for it keeps us from afflicting any with needleſs Grief, or enticing them to any Enormity. Prov. 8. 36.

Secondly, A Man may do, or receive Harm in his Body, as by Maimings, Murders, and other Acts of Violence; to which

which we may refer all Duels, Aſſaſſinations, and the like; the miſerable Effects of Intemperance and unbridled Paſſions: Now *Charity* is ſo far from doing any of theſe, that it ſuppreſſes all Thoughts of Unkindneſs or Revenge, which are ſo directly contrary, and inconſiſtent with the Love we owe to our Selves, and one another; for tho' the repairing Men's Honour, be the uſual Plea for ſuch Barbarities, yet nothing doth more certainly impair it; it being a great Weakneſs, to be overcome of Evil; and a noble Victory, to overcome Evil with Good.

Thirdly, We may hurt our Neighbour in his Goods or Eſtate, by invading his Right, and with-holding what is Due to him; and that, either by the open ways of Rapine and Oppreſſion; or the more ſecret Methods of Fraud and Deceit: of this kind, are the with-holding of all juſt Debts; and particularly of the Hire of the Labourer; all Breaches of Promiſe; betraying of Truſts, together with all other Acts of Wrong and Injuſtice; all which are manifeſt Violations, both of the Laws of God, and Man. Now *Charity*, which wills us to do as we would be done by, is the beſt Preſervative againſt all theſe; for that ties up, not only,

ly our Hands from Plundering or Purloining, but our Hearts from coveting or desiring what is another's; and where we have at any time, tho' involuntarily injur'd our Neighbour; it teaches us to make him all just Satisfaction and Reparation.

Lastly, A Man may receive Harm in his Name and Reputation; and that, either by publick Slanders and Calumnies, which are the Arrows that flie by Day; or by secret Whispers and Backbitings, which is the Pestilence that walketh in Darkness, and wounds without being seen: and this is a far greater Injury, than too many seem to be aware of, who let loose the Reins to an unbridled Tongue, and daily shoot out their Arrows, even bitter Words. The Subsistence of some Persons depend very much upon their Credit, and to revile them, is in effect to Ruin and Undo them, yea, the Comfort and Well-being of all, consists much in a good Name; which *Solomon* declares to *be sweeter than precious Ointment*; which perfumes the Air we breathe in, and communicates its Odour, and Fragrancy, to all that are round about us: So that to vent Calumnies and Reproaches, is to corrupt the savour of this Ointment, to poyson the Air, and Eccl. 7. 1.

and ſcatter Death and Infection where-ever we come. He that openly utters Slanders, doth, in a manner, Murder his Neighbour in the Streets; he that more cloſely undermines him by Whiſpers and ſly Inſinuations, ſecretly ſtrikes at his Heart, and wounds with the inviſible Darts of Envy and Detraction.

Now *Charity*, which bindeth up the Heart from thinking Evil, will tie up the Tongue from venting or ſpreading it; for 'tis from the Abundance of the Heart that the Mouth Speaketh; and if all Venom and Rancor be remov'd thence, it will not break out at the Mouth, nor appear in the Malignity of the Tongue. Thus I have ſhew'd you ſome of the many Ways of doing Evil to our Neighbour, from all which this Grace of *Charity* will moſt effectually reſtrain us, and that not only in the overt Acts, but in the inward Thoughts, Deſires, and Intentions of the Heart, for *Charity thinketh no Evil.*

But beſide this negative Part, there is ſome thing poſitive imply'd in this Branch of *Charity*; for Love, not only *thinketh no Evil*, but contrariwiſe, thinketh all manner of Good; 'tis not enough to eſchew Evil, and avoid hurting our Neighbour,

Neighbour, tho' that be an eminent Advance in this Virtue, but we muſt carry it farther by doing Good, and wiſhing the Welfare of one another.

Now as there are ſeveral Ways of Injuring Mankind, which *Charity* baniſhes the Thoughts of, ſo, there are ſundry Ways of Benefiting and Befriending one another, which this Virtue requires us to think of, and to practiſe. As,

Firſt, The Souls of Men are capable of receiving much Good, as well as Hurt by us; we may eaſe their Griefs, cheer their Spirits, and either remove, or lighten the Burden of their Sorrows; this the Apoſtle exhorts to, when he bids us to *bear one anothers Burdens, and ſo we ſhall fulfill the Law of Chriſt.* Gal. 6. 2. And this the Law of *Charity* requires us.

Again, We may by good Counſel and Example, prevent Men's falling into Sin, and reſcue them from the Snare of the Devil; And, if it be an Act of *Charity* to keep our Neighbour's Ox or Aſs from falling into a Pit, or being in, to help him out; how much more ſo is it, to keep off Danger from his Soul, and to reſcue it from the Pit of Deſtruction? Moreover,

Secondly, The Bodies of Men are capable of receiving much Good as well as Harm

Harm by us: We may relieve their Wants, ſupport their Weakneſs, and aſſiſt them many Ways in the needful Time of Trouble; of this the Good *Samaritan* in the Goſpel, hath left an excellent Pattern, in Pitying the wounded Traveller; pouring Wine and Oyl into his Wounds, and taking all due Care of him; and our Saviour's recommending his Example to our Imitation, by bidding us go and do likewiſe, ſhews this to be a neceſſary and commendable Piece of *Charity*.

Thirdly, We may be Serviceable, as well as Injurious to Men's Eſtates and Fortunes; ſometimes it may be in our Power to befriend a Neighbour, and better his Condition; a good Word may ſometimes do him a good Turn; for *A Word ſpoken in ſeaſon is* (as the Wiſe-man tells us) *like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver*. And where this is due to the Merits of any, 'tis not only Unkindneſs, but Injuſtice to with-hold it; for the Apoſtle wills us, as we have Opportunity, to do Good to all Men; and *Charity, that thinketh no Evil*, hath nothing but Thoughts of Good, to all that are within her Reach.

Prov. 25. 11.

Laſtly, We may be Helpful, as well as Hurtful

Hurtful to the Good-Name, and Reputation of others, by wiping off that Dirt, which ill Tongues may be too apt to faſten upon it; and likewiſe, by publiſhing the juſt Praiſes due to their Virtue and Merits. If any ſuffer under a Slander or Scandal, which we know to be falſe, *Charity* teaches us to appear in his Defence; to aſſert his Innocency, and vindicate his Good-Name, from the evil Deſigns of Malice and Defamation. This is a Right we owe to one another; to ſilence Obloquy, and ſtrike Detractors dumb. And, as we may not blacken, or leſſen the Fame of any, by the evil Arts of Envy and Detraction; ſo, ought we to be juſt to the Honour of Virtue, and ſpread the Fame of ſuch as deſerve well, where it may be of any Uſe and Benefit to them: If you obſerve it, you may find ſome uneaſy and impatient of hearing of others Praiſe; looking on it as a tacit Upbraiding, or Diminution of their own; and if the Light of their good Works ſhine too bright to be conceal'd, yet ſtill ſome Miſt of Error or Failing ſhall be rais'd, to diminiſh or obſcure it, and their forc'd Commendations, be mingled with ſome Alloys of Detraction. This is oppoſite to this Grace of *Charity*, which

hurts No-body in Word or Deed, but wiſhes well to all, both in Body, Goods, and Name.

Thus I have in ſome Meaſure explain'd this excellent Quality of *Charity*, which reſtrains us from thinking any Evil to our Neighbour, and prompts us to the deſiring, and doing him all manner of Good: From whence we may obſerve,

Firſt, The Extent of this Virtue, which reaches the very Thoughts, and not only reforms the outward Actions, but regards the Heart, and refines the inward Deſires and Intentions of the Soul: 'tis a uſual Saying among Men, that Thoughts are free, and indeed ſo they are from the Cognizance and Cenſure of human Laws; but they are not ſo from the Knowledge and Puniſhment of God Almighty, who ſearches the Heart, and requires Truth and Integrity from the inward Parts. Moreover, the Apoſtle, to ſet forth the Largeneſs and Comprehenſiveneſs of this Virtue, ſtyles it *the Fulfilling of the Law; for this thou ſhalt not Kill, thou ſhalt not commit Adultery, thou ſhalt not Steal, and if there be any Commandment, 'tis briefly comprehended in this Saying, Thou ſhalt Love thy Neighbour as thy Self*, Rom. 13. 'tis ſometimes call'd the *old Commandment* becauſe

becauſe 'tis a Dictate of Nature, and was from the Beginning; ſometimes 'tis ſtyl'd *a new Commandment*, becauſe 'twas renew'd by our Bleſſed Saviour, and preſs'd by new and higher Motives; ſometimes 'tis called *all the Commandments*: for Love worketh no ill to his Neighbour, therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law.

Secondly, We learn hence the Excellency and Uſefulneſs of *Charity* to the Welfare of Mankind; for it not only ties up the Tongue from ſpeaking, and the Hand from acting, but the Head from thinking, and the Heart from wiſhing Evil unto any; yea, it engages all theſe, in promoting the Good of one another; And how much this muſt conduce to the Peace and Happineſs of the World, 'tis eaſy to imagine: Wherefore,

Laſtly, Let us learn and practice this excellent Piece of *Charity*, which will keep us, not only from doing, but deſiring and deſigning Evil unto any; to which End let us,

Firſt, Keep ſtrict Guard upon our Hearts, and watch them with all Diligence, *for out of them are the Iſſues of Life.* Let us purifie our Hearts by Faith; and waſh them from their natural Defilement; for, *out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts*, a corrupt

Fountain muſt ſend forth foul Streams. Our Hearts are naturally wicked, and the *Thoughts of them are Evil, and that continually:* And therefore this Fountain muſt be kept pure, before the Thoughts that iſſue from it can be ſo. And becauſe this is no eaſy Task, we muſt make our Requeſts known unto God, praying him to *create a clean Heart, and renew a right Spirit within us.* That we may not lightly take up an evil Report, or groundleſs Suſpicion, or ſpread any Evil againſt our Neighbour, which is a Violation of *Charity.* Finally Brethren, whatſoever things are Honeſt, whatſoever things are Lovely, and of good Report; if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praiſe, think on theſe things; ſo ſhall we learn that *Charity,* that thinketh no Evil.

Pſal. 51.

The

The PROPERTIES OF CHARITY:

It rejoyceth not in Iniquity.

1 Cor. XIII. 6.

Charity *rejoyceth not in Iniquity.*

I Have ſpoken of that Property of *Charity* that governs the Paſſion of Anger, and reſtrains the Thoughts from thinking or wiſhing Evil. I proceed in the

Next Place, to another Property of it, which regulates the Paſſions of Joy and Sorrow, and fixes both on their right Objects. And this is contain'd in theſe Words, *Rejoyceth not in Iniquity, but rejoyceth in the Truth*, the Senſe whereof is, that *Charity* keeps Men not only from Doing,

but Delighting in any Evil, and makes Good the ſole Object of their Joy and Complacence.

But for the better Underſtanding of this Property, I muſt enquire,

Firſt, What we are to Underſtand here by Iniquity?

Secondly, What is meant by rejoycing in Iniquity?

Thirdly, I muſt ſhew *Charity* to be ſo far from rejoycing in it, that it renders it the Object of Grief and Sorrow. For the

Firſt, Iniquity properly ſignifies whatſoever is contrary to Equity, and ſo is the Reverſe of fair and equal Dealing, the Word in the Original is ἀδικία, which in a ſtrict Senſe, ſignifies Deceit and Falſeneſs, as the oppoſite of Right and Juſtice; ſo 'tis taken *John* 7. 18. where 'tis ſaid of Chriſt οὐκ ἔστιν ἀδικία ἐν αὐτῷ, there is no Unrighteouſneſs, that is, no Deceitfulneſs or Guile in Him: But both *Iniquity* in Engliſh, and ἀδικία in Greek, are ſometimes taken in a larger Senſe; for all manner of Sin and Wickedneſs, which are ſo many Acts of Injuſtice always againſt God, and ſometimes againſt our Neighbour, and our Selves. We never omit any thing which we ought to do,

or

or commit any thing which we ſhould leave undone, but we fail of our Duty, and prove falſe to our Maker: As He is our Father and Maſter, we are to pay him Homage and Obedience; As we are his Children and Servants, we owe him Love, Fear, and Reverence: when we withhold theſe from Him, we rob God of his Due, and deal falſely and deceitfully with Him; ſo that every Sin is a Piece of Iniquity againſt God, and every Violation of his Law, not only an Indignity, but Injuſtice done unto Him. Again,

If we break not only the Laws of God, but our Country, and, againſt the Rules of both, invade the Rights of others, we become doubly Unjuſt, and to the Iniquity againſt God, add Injury and Deceit to our Neighbour.

Laſtly, If in breaking the divine Laws, we act any thing againſt the Health, Peace, or Welfare of our own Bodies, or Souls, we bring the Wrong nearer Home, and prove falſe and injurious to our own Selves. So that Injuſtice and Falſhood, being included in all Kinds of Sin and Wickedneſs, they may be, and very frequently are ſtyl'd, by the Name of Iniquity; But what is it to rejoyce in Iniquity? this will need but little Explica-

tion, becauſe every one knows the Nature, and feels the Effects of Joy, which is the reviving and chearing of the Spirits upon the doing or thinking of any Action; and few can be ſo unacquainted with the Motions and Operations of their own Minds, as to be ignorant how they are affected with what delights them, and what it is to take Pleaſure in the Enjoyment and Practice of it.

But are there any ſuch Monſters in Nature, as to make Sin and Wickedneſs the Matter of Joy, to rejoyce in Iniquity, and delight in the Follies and Deformity of human Nature?

Yes, that there are too many ſuch, not only the Hiſtory of former, but the ſad Experience of the preſent Times, may too plainly inform us; St. *Paul* in his firſt Chapter of his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, after a long and black Catalogue of the moſt heinous and vile Abominations, that could be committed by Mankind; adds, that there were many, who, not only delighted in thoſe things themſelves, but *took Pleaſure in them that did them.* Verſe 32. and in his Epiſtle to the *Philippians* he tells us of others, that *Gloried in their Shame*; *making their Belly their God, and minding only Earthly Things*; of whom he

he could not ſpeak without weeping, becauſe, being *Enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt, their End was Deſtruction.* Philip. 3. 18, 19. I could heartily wiſh, that ſuch Unnatural Practices were unknown in our Days, and that None of this vile Temper were to be found among us. But alas! if we look abroad, and obſerve the Courſe of Men's Lives, we ſhall find many, inſtead of repenting of, rejoyce in their Iniquities, and take Pleaſure in that which will end at laſt in the greateſt Pain.

But who are they that may be ſaid thus to Rejoyce in Iniquity? why, of theſe, there are ſundry Sorts, which may be reduc'd to theſe Two.

Firſt, Such as rejoyce in their own Iniquities. And,

Secondly, Such as take Pleaſure in the Sins and Wickedneſs of others; the Apoſtle, in that forecited Place, takes Notice of both; telling us of ſome, *that did very ill things themſelves*; and likewiſe of others, *that took Pleaſure in them that did them.* Of the former, there are likewiſe two Sorts, to wit, Such as more openly act and boaſt of their Vices; And ſuch, as commit them more cloſely, but with as great Delight and Satisfaction. Rom. 1. 32.

Firſt,

First, I say, all such as boast of their Impieties, and delight in thinking and speaking of their Debauches, may be properly said to *Rejoyce in Iniquity*.

This is the Practice of openly prophane and loose Persons, who *declare their Sins as Sodom, and hide them not*; Applauding their Vices and Themselves for them, and taking, not only a Pleasure, but a Pride in rehearsing them: Yea, some are arriv'd to that Love and Delight in Sin, as to boast of more than they have committed; as if it added to their Honour to add to their Sins; and they would raise their Glory, by the Number and Blackness of their Crimes.

This is a Degree of Wickedness that Men cannot presently come to; they must be long Practitioners in Vice, before they can take any Pride or Pleasure in it: For there is such a natural Sense of Good and Evil implanted in us, that makes Conscience recoil and turn upon us, when we have done a wicked thing. Now this Reluctance, or Regret of Mind, must be taken off, which being natural, is a Work of Time and Difficulty, before Men can find any Joy or Delight in Sinning. And yet Experience shews us, that some such there are, who glory

glory in their Shame, and delight in what is the Deformity and Diſgrace of human Nature. Again,

Secondly, There are others, who Practice their Wickedneſs more cloſely and ſecretly, but, with as great Delight and Satisfaction as the former: And theſe, tho' Sinning with more Art and Caution, yet whilſt they retain an inward Love and Liking to their Sins, may be truly ſaid to *Rejoyce in Iniquity*. This is the Guiſe of Hypocrites, and great Pretenders, who love the Sin, but hate Diſcovery: If they can ſo cunningly Outwit and Defraud another, as to keep out of the Clutches of the Law, they applaud their Wiſdom, and go off triumphing in the Spoils of their Neighbour; if they can ſo cloſely act and conceal their Lewdneſs, as to eſcape Obſervation, with the Adultereſs Woman in the *Proverbs*, they *wipe their Mouth and ſay, they have done no Evil:* There are ſome who are at great Pains to diſguiſe their Wickedneſs, putting fair Colours upon it, and giving good Names to bad Matters; calling Sacriledge, Reformation; Treaſon againſt their Prince, Zeal for the Glory of God; Schiſm and Separation, by the Name of greater Purity, and the like: And certainly, they muſt entertain

tertain their Sins with great Pleaſure and Delight, who uſe ſo much Art, rather than part with, or forbear the Practice of them. But beſide theſe, who rejoyce in their own Iniquities, there is a ſecond Sort, that take Pleaſure and Rejoyce in the Sins of others: and of theſe likewiſe, there are ſeveral Sorts; as,

Firſt, All ſuch as allure or draw others into Sin, may be reckon'd in the Number of thoſe who *Rejoyce in Iniquity*, for none will perſwade another to that, which he hath not ſome Love or Liking to himſelf; he that loves Virtue, will never tempt another to Vice. A Sober Perſon will not importune any to Exceſs or Intemperance; A Chaſt Perſon, that delights in the Purity of Body and Mind, will never ſollicit another to any Uncleanneſs; the drawing of any into theſe Vices, betrays either an open or ſecret Delight in them; and 'tis a plain Sign of Men's *loving Darkneſs rather than Light, when once their Deeds are Evil.*

Secondly, All ſuch as delight in the Company of looſe, profane, and debauch'd Perſons, fall under the Character and Guilt of *Rejoycing in Iniquity*, for ſuch muſt find ſome inward Complacency in their Vices; or elſe 'tis not to be conceiv'd

ceiv'd, how they ſhould bear them; there are Uneaſineſſes enough in ſuch a Society, to make any wiſe or good Man to ſhun it: their frequent Swearing and Curſing, cannot but grate the Ears; their intemperate Cups, muſt drown their Reaſon; their great Exceſſes impair the Health of the Body; and their obſcene Talk, pollute and debauch the Mind; and certainly, nothing but a great Delight in Sinning, can make them pleas'd with ſuch Company, or reconcile them to the vaſt Troubles and Inconveniences of it: Again,

Thirdly, There are ſome, who being engaged in a Sect or Party, ſecretly rejoice in all the Evil they ſee or hear in thoſe, from whom they withdraw themſelves: This is the Guiſe of Schiſmaticks and Separatiſts, who, inſtead of being ſorry, are inwardly delighted with Stories of others Miſcarriages; they are glad to ſee the Intemperance, and to hear of the Debauchery of ſome about them; becauſe it makes them applaud their greater Purity, and gives them the Pleaſure of thinking themſelves better than they: others Failings, inſtead of making them humble, and looking more warily to their own Ways, do but gratify their Pride, and harden them in their Errors; putting (as they

they think) a better Countenance upon their Schiſm, and giving ſome plauſible Colour and Plea for their Separation.

The Prophet *Jeremy* tells us of ſome *who watch for our Halting*; and certainly, they who look for others Halting, will be glad to ſee them fall: ſo grateful, and delicious to ſome Men, are others Failings, when they help to ſet off themſelves, and to gratify their ſanctified Spleen.

Yea, this evil Spirit carries them ſometimes farther, even to rejoice in the Misfortunes of other Men, and to feel a ſecret Pleaſure in the Calamities that befall them: There is (as one hath obſerv'd) a certain Wolfiſh Principle in ſome Men, that is fed and gratified with another's Miſery; of which, no other Account can be given, but that 'tis the Nature of the Beaſt to delight in ſuch things.

Fourthly, There are a Sort of ſuperannuated Sinners, who being paſt the Commiſſion of ſome Sins in their own Perſon, delight to ſee or hear of them in others, and ſupply the Impotence of Action, by the Pleaſure of Fancy and Speculation; their Delight in thinking and talking of their former Vices, ſhews, they retain the ſame old Kindneſs and Affection for them;

them; and if Age hath disabled them from following them, 'tis not that they have left their Sins, but their Sins have left them. In short, all such as continue in their Sins, without Repentance and Amendment, and likewise all such, as any way countenance or encourage it in others, may be reckon'd in the Number of those that *Rejoyce in Iniquity.*

Now *Charity*, which includes in it the Love of God, our Neighbour, and our Selves, is the most effectual Cure of this Malady: for that, instead of rejoicing in Iniquity, renders it the Object of our Grief and Detestation.

That Branch of *Charity* that consists in the Love of God, enclines us to hate and abhor whatever is Offensive to Him; and because all Sin and Wickedness is an Affront to the Authority of his Laws, and directly contrary both to his Nature and Will, it makes us shun it as dishonourable, and consequently displeasing to him. Again,

That Branch of *Charity*, that respects the Love of our Neighbour, disposes us to avoid all that is hurtful and injurious to Him; and because all Deceit, Detraction, and the like, have an ill Influence upon his Welfare, it wills us not to

delight

delight in, but to deteſt ſuch vile Enormities. Moreover,

That Branch of *Charity*, that regards the Love of our Selves, teaches us to flee all ſuch things as are any ways deſtructive, either of Body or Soul; and becauſe Intemperance, Luſt, Impatience, and the like, deſtroy the preſent Peace, and bring on greater Pains and Ruin on both, it wills us not to follow, but forſake them. Hence we find, that good Men in all Ages, have ever bewail'd and lamented their Iniquities, but never made them the Object of their Delight and Complacence. We read of *Lot*, that

2 Pet. 2. 7, 8. *his Righteous Soul was vex'd from Day to Day with the filthy Converſation of the Wicked.* King *David* was ſo far from Rejoycing, that he ſhed many a Tear, both for his own and others Iniquity, the Remembrance of his Murder and Adultery, almoſt overwhelm'd him with Sorrow; Inſomuch, that *Tears were his Meat Day and Night, when he thought thereupon.* Neither were the Sins of others a Delight, but a Grief and Burthen to him; for

Pſal. 119. *Rivers of Tears* (as he tells us) *ran down his Eyes, becauſe Men kept not God's Law.* St. *Peter* was ſo far from ruminating upon his Sin with any Pleaſure, that the

Re-

Remembrance of it made Him go forth and *weep bitterly.* Yea, we find it to be the Character of ſuch, who are given up to a reprobate Senſe, to *Delight in doing ill things themſelves, and to take Pleaſure in them that do them.* Wherefore, Mat. 26. 75. Rom. 1. 32.

Let us beware of this vile Temper and Practice; let us take Heed how we harbour any Sin with Delight, or conceive a Joy in any ſinful Courſe; for this is not only extream Folly, but is attended with unexpreſſible Danger.

All that can ſo far reconcile Men to their Iniquities, as to Rejoyce in them, muſt be either from ſome ſeeming Pleaſure they feel in them, or ſome preſent Profit they find by them; but both theſe, are mere Deluſions of Satan, and the falſe Suggeſtions of a deceitful Heart; for *the Joy of the Wicked* (ſaith the Wiſe-man) *is but like the cracking of Thorns under a Pot*, which yields nothing but a ſhort, grating and vaniſhing Noiſe: and all the Gain that can be reap'd from any ſinful Courſe, will in the End prove the greateſt Loſs. Ec. 7. 6.

But the Danger of Rejoycing in Iniquity, is much greater than the Folly of it: For,

Firſt, This hinders Men from repent-

ing and recovering themſelves from it; for no Man can repent of a thing in which he rejoyces. Repentance conſiſts in a Sorrow for what is paſt, and a turning from it for the Time to come; now, None can be ſorry for that in which he takes Pleaſure, nor will any Turn from a thing in which he finds himſelf delighted: 'tis a Senſe of Pain, and Uneaſineſs in Sin, that makes any willing to leave it, which cannot be, whilſt he conceives a Joy, or retains a Liking to it.

Secondly, Rejoycing in Sin, puts an effectual Bar to the Pardon and Forgiveneſs of it. This follows from the former; for without Repentance there is no Remiſſion; *Except ye repent* (ſaith our Saviour) *ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh*: ſo that this Diſpoſition of Mind, that hinders Penitence, excludes Pardon; and whatever leads Men to an impenitent, leaves them in a deſperate State.

Luk. 13. 5.

To prevent which, Let us beware of indulging our ſelves in any Vice, or continuing long in the Practice of any known Sin. For Pleaſure is the Reſult of Practice and old Acquaintance: he that accuſtoms himſelf to any evil Courſe, will by degrees contract a Kindneſs and Affection for it, and become unwilling to

part

part with it. Cuſtom and long Uſe, takes off the natural Tenderneſs and Reluctance of Conſcience againſt Sin; makes it familiar, and ſo far reconciles Men to Iniquity, as to make them *Rejoyce in it.* And therefore,

We muſt break off all Acquaintance with Sin, if we mean to break off from the Love and Liking of it. To which end, Let us labour and pray for this excellent Grace of *Charity*, and that will not only ſecure us from delighting in Vice, but make it the Object of our Hatred and Averſation; Let us endeavour to have the Love of God planted in our Hearts, and that will root out the Love of Sin; yea, and make us like God Himſelf, of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity without Deteſtation.

The PROPERTIES OF CHARITY: It *Rejoyceth in the Truth.*

1 Cor. XIII. 6.

Charity *rejoyceth in the Truth.*

I Diſcours'd the laſt time of that negative Property of *Charity*, that keeps Men from Rejoycing in Iniquity, and makes it the Object of their Hatred and Deteſtation. I proceed now

To that poſitive Part of it, that enclines to delight in Vertue, and to render Good the ſole Object of its Delight and Complacence, contain'd in theſe Words: *But rejoyceth in the Truth.* In treating whereof I muſt ſhew,

Firſt, What is meant here by Truth?

Secondly,

Secondly, What by Rejoycing in the Truth?

Thirdly, That 'tis *Charity* that begets this Joy and Rejoycing in the Truth; and ſhall likewiſe inform you how, or which way it does it.

Firſt then, We muſt ask *Pilate*'s Queſtion, *What is Truth*? and reſolve it too, tho' he were too Impatient to ſtay for an Anſwer. For the right Underſtanding whereof we may note, that John. 18. 38.

Truth, is ſometimes oppos'd to Error; and then it ſignifies the Agreeableneſs of our Apprehenſions with the Nature of Things: Thus when we believe and judge of things as they really are, we are ſaid to be in the Truth; when we do otherwiſe, to be in an Error. Again,

Secondly, Truth is ſometimes oppos'd to Lying and Falſhood, in which Senſe it betokens the Agreeableneſs of our Words and Promiſes, with the Intention and Purpoſes of our Mind; thus when we ſpeak as we Think, and perform what we Promiſe, we are ſaid to deal Truly; but when 'tis otherwiſe, we Lie and do not the Truth.

Thirdly, Truth is ſometimes oppos'd to Hypocriſy and Deceit; and then it beſpeaks the Agreeableneſs of our Actions,

with our Pretences: thus when we do as we pretend, and really are what we would be thought to be, we are ſaid to prove True; when we Act otherwiſe, we prevaricate, and the Truth is not in us.

But beſide theſe, Truth is ſometimes taken in a larger Senſe, and comprizes all Virtue; in which Senſe 'tis the ſame with Religion in general, which in Scripture is often ſtyl'd the Truth: nothing is more frequent than to call the Way of Religion the *Way of Truth*; they that walk in it, are ſaid *to Walk in the Truth*; and they that leave it, are ſaid *to Err from the Truth*; our Bleſſed Saviour is ſtyl'd *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*: that is, he reveals the true Religion to us, and rewards the Practice of it, and by being the Truth, he is the Way to eternal Life. The Law of God, that directs to the Paths of Virtue, is call'd *the Truth*, and the Goſpel, *the Truth, as it is in Jeſus Chriſt*. Now Religion is very properly call'd and expreſs'd by the Name of Truth;

Firſt, Becauſe it implies our being True to God, in Rendring him that Duty and Homage, that Fear and Reverence, that Worſhip and Service, which we owe to Him. *Secondly*,

Secondly, It ſignifies our being True to our Neighbour, in paying him all that Juſtice, Kindneſs, and other good Offices we owe to him.

Thirdly, It implies our being True to our Selves, by obſerving thoſe Rules of Temperance, Sobriety and Chaſtity that become us, and are abſolutely neceſſary to our own Welfare. In a word, the whole Syſtem of Divinity, containing the Precepts, Promiſes, and Threatenings of the divine Law, the ſincere Practice of Virtue, and all the Acts of a holy Life, is here, and frequently elſewhere, ſtyl'd the Truth.

But what is it to *Rejoyce in the Truth*? to Rejoyce, in the general Notion of it, is the dilating or chearing of the Spirits, upon the Sight or Enjoyment of any Object, or a cleaving to it with Delight and Satisfaction; to rejoyce in the Truth, is to purſue and embrace Virtue with Delight, and to behold it with Complacence, both in our ſelves and others; but to ſpeak more particularly, this Expreſſion implies,

Firſt, A Delight in the Truth, in oppoſition to Error; and ſo it ſignifies a Deſire of knowing what is True, and a Willingneſs to receive and embrace it accordingly;

ingly; Truth may be ſometimes ſo obſcur'd and entangl'd by Error, that 'tis not eaſy for weak, tho' well-meaning People, to diſcern the one from the other; by which means many, by the cunning Craftineſs of ſuch as ly in wait to deceive, are unhappily led into great Miſtakes: now a Willingneſs to be rightly inform'd, and a readineſs to receive and aſſent to it, when 'tis diſcover'd, is what the Apoſtle here means by *Rejoycing in the Truth*: and indeed, this is Matter of as great Joy, as the finding of a loſt Treaſure. *David* rejoyc'd more in it *than he that findeth great Spoils.* The Reſtoring of loſt Truth, is far beyond the Recovery of loſt Sheep; and our Joy for the one, ſhould as much exceed the other, as the Soul is more excellent than the Body, and the Glories of the next World ſurpaſs the periſhing Trifles of this.

Secondly, This Expreſſion implies a Delight in the Truth, in oppoſition to Lying and Falſhood; and ſo it ſignifies at all Times, a deſire to ſpeak and hear the Truth; and a diligent Care, that our Words always agree with the inward Thoughts and Intentions of the Mind: there are many, who either to eſcape ſome Danger, or to procure to themſelves

themſelves ſome Good, will venture to ſay any Untruth, and confidently utter what they know to be Falſe. We read of ſome, who *make Lies their Refuge*; and of others, that *take Pleaſure in Leaſeing*: theſe are ſome of thoſe that *rejoyce in Iniquity*, and find Pleaſure or Profit in the ways of Unrighteouſneſs: Whereas to *Rejoyce in the Truth*, is to hate this way of Lying; Never to have recourſe to it to help our ſelves or others, but to deſire and delight always in ſpeaking the Truth from our Heart.

Thirdly, The Expreſſion implies *a Rejoycing in the Truth*, in oppoſition to Hypocriſy and Double-Dealing: and ſo it is the ſame with Sincerity, or the making our Practices ſuit and correſpond with our Profeſſion. Hypocriſy is, you know, an Affectation of ſeeming to be what a Man is not: 'tis the Counterfeit of Religion, or an outward Show and Appearance of it, without the Truth of the thing it ſelf; and there are but too many, who court the Shadow of Truth without the Subſtance; gilding the outward Man with fair Colours, when within, like whited Sepulchers, they are full of Rottenneſs and Corruption. Now to *Rejoyce in the Truth*, is in oppoſition to theſe,

theſe, to deſire Truth in the inward Parts, to make our Actions anſwer and ſpeak the ſame Things with our Profeſſion, and inwardly to be, what we outwardly pretend.

In a Word, to *Rejoyce in the Truth*, is to delight in the Practice of all Chriſtian Virtues; to live in a chearful and faithful Diſcharge of our Duty our ſelves, and likewiſe to be glad to ſee others do the ſame.

Now *Charity* is that excellent Grace, that works in us theſe Divine and God-like Qualities, and diſpoſes Men, not only to do well themſelves, but to take Pleaſure in them that do ſo. The Love we bear to God, will incline us to Rejoyce in whatever tends to promote his Glory; and becauſe the united Prayers and Praiſes of his People tend moſt to advance his Honour, nothing is more acceptable in the Eyes of God and good Men: *I was glad* (ſaith *David*) *when they ſaid unto me, Come let us go up to the Houſe of God, our Feet ſhall ſtand in thy Gates, O Jeruſalem*: to ſee Men live in Obedience to the Laws of God and to their Country, is a pleaſing Sight to all that wiſh well to *Zion*; *Behold how good and pleaſant a thing it is, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity.* The

Pſal. 122. 1, 2.

Pſ. 133. 1.

evil

evil Spirits only dance at Diſcord; and none but ſuch as are influenc'd by them, delight in Schiſms and Diviſions. Again,

The Love we bear to our Neighbour, makes us Rejoyce in whatever tends to promote his Happineſs; and becauſe nothing conduces more to the Peace and Welfare of Mankind, than Acts of Juſtice, Fair Dealing, and a Univerſal Honeſty, *Charity* will make us glad to ſee Men live in the Practice of thoſe Virtues. Furthermore,

A true Love of our ſelves, will prompt us to purſue what is moſt for our preſent Health, and our future Happineſs; and becauſe the Virtues of Temperance, Meekneſs, and Chaſtity, beſt conduce to thoſe Ends, the Grace of *Charity* will diſpoſe us to delight in the Practice of them. Thus *Charity*, which wiſheth the Salvation of all Men, Rejoyceth to ſee any walking in the Way, and uſing the Means that lead to it. But to clear this Matter in the forecited Particulars, I ſay,

Firſt, That *Charity Rejoyceth in the Truth*, as 'tis oppos'd to Error; for 'tis deſirous to know the Truth, to find out the right Way, and to avoid Miſtakes, eſpecially in the great Matters of Religion: to which end it is evermore Humble

ble, and Teachable, the main Qualifications of a Learner; And free from Pride, Prejudice, and Partiality, the great Occasions and Promoters of Error. *Charity edifieth* (saith the Apostle) 1 *Cor.* 8. 1. it corrects both the Vanity and Errors of Knowledge, and makes Men willing to search and find out the Truth: we find *David* often praying to be directed in the ways of Truth, and making the Law of God his Study, Day and Night, to that end. Now this Grace of *Charity* is our best Guide to this Purpose; for this inclines the Mind to Knowledge, and engages God to direct it. *He that doth the will of my Father* (saith our Saviour) *he shall know the Truth whether it be of God.* In a word, *Charity* will direct us to the Ways of Truth and Peace, and likewise help us to walk on chearfully and constantly in them.

John. 7. 17.

Secondly, Charity *Rejoyceth in the Truth*, as 'tis oppos'd to Falshood and Lying. There is scarce any thing more odious, both to God and Man, than the Sin of Lying; and nothing doth so cover a Man with Shame, as to be found False and Perfidious: and therefore *Charity*, which is an Enemy to all Vice, is more especially so to this, which perverts the

Use

Uſe of Speech, and ſubverts the End of all Society: Whereas Truth adds Grace to our Words, and is the Honour of human Nature; and therefore *Charity*, which loves fair and open Dealing, is delighted with this, as the chiefeſt Ornament of Speech, and the beſt Inſtrument of Commerce, and Converſation. The Pſalmiſt deſcribes a good Man to be one, that *ſpeaketh the Truth from his Heart*; he hates Falſifying and ſpeaking with a Double-Tongue; Nothing pleaſes him ſo much as Truth, and nothing is able to allure or affright him from it.

Thirdly, Charity *Rejoyceth in the Truth*, as 'tis oppoſed to Hypocriſy and feigned Pretences: there is a great Deal of bad Ware obtruded upon the World by dark Shops; many Deeds of Darkneſs are ſet off by falſe and feigned Lights; fair Shows have mightily impos'd upon the Weakneſs and Credulity of Mankind; and many bad Things have paſs'd for Religion, through the Masks and Diſguiſes of Hypocrites; *Charity* therefore to Men's Souls, will not approve, but lay open the Danger of theſe falſe Lights, to keep them from being miſled by them, and not only hates, but diſcovers the Frauds and Artifices of Hypocriſy: Whereas

Whereas Truth is a naked and open Day-light, and takes off theſe Masks, and ſhews Perſons and Things as they are. And this is what *Charity* approves of, and takes Pleaſure in; it removes out of Men's Minds all vain Opinions, flattering Hopes, falſe Valuations and Imaginations of Things, and delights only in Sincerity and Truth.

In ſhort, *Charity* mourns and laments the Sins and Follies of Mankind; to ſee ſo many deſtroy Themſelves, and Neglect the Things that belong to their Peace, and eternal Salvation; and is never better pleas'd, than to ſee Goodneſs and Truth prevail and take Place in the World.

This is what the Apoſtle here means by *Rejoycing in the Truth*; wherefore let us learn this excellent Property of *Charity*, to be afflicted with Evil, and delighted only with that which is Good. To grieve at the Hypocriſy, Looſeneſs and Debauchery that is found among Men, and to Rejoyce in the poor Remainders of Vertue and Truth, and to take Pleaſure in thoſe that practice them. To this end know,

Firſt, That God is Truth, and to *Rejoyce in the Truth*, is to Rejoyce in God; he

he hath no Pleaſure in Wickedneſs, but in Truth and Vertue his Soul delighteth: and when we are thus affected towards both, we imitate our Heavenly Father, and become *Followers of him as dear Children.* Again,

Secondly, We read that there is Joy in Heaven, at the Repentance and Converſion of a Sinner from the Evil of his ways; and the Holy Angels, not only aſſiſt but celebrate the Acts of Vertue and Goodneſs; ſo that, when we rejoyce in theſe Things, we joyn with the heavenly Hoſt, and bear a Part with them, in the Praiſes of our Maker; hence (a great Man hath told us) that 'tis a Heaven upon Earth, to have a Man's Mind move in *Charity*, reſt in Faith, and turn upon the Poles of Truth. Moreover,

Thirdly, The Joy that ſprings from Vertue and Truth, is alone permanent and laſting; the Pleaſures of Sin are but for a Seaſon, and that a very ſhort one too; the Joy of the Wicked is mingled with Sorrow, and will ſhortly end *in weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth*: but the Pleaſures of Vertue are pure and unmixt, and will continue ſo to all Eternity. *A Lying Tongue is but for a Moment*, and *the Hope of the Hypocrite ſhall periſh*: Prov. 12. 19.

periſh: whereas great is the Power of Truth, which will prevail at laſt, and for ever triumph over Error. Beſide,

Fourthly, There is that native Beauty and Luſtre in Truth, that renders it fair and amiable, and makes it lovely, even in its plaineſt Dreſs; whereas Sin and Error have no Form or Comelineſs in them, that they ſhould be deſir'd; yea, they have that natural Uglineſs and Deformity in them, that renders them odious in the Sight of God, and when ſtript of their Diſguiſes, are deſpis'd too, and rejected of Men.

Laſtly, 'Tis made in holy Scripture the Brand and Character of a vile Perſon, to Rejoyce in Sin, and take Pleaſure in Iniquity; whereas the Good Man is deſcrib'd by his Loving the Truth, and Hating Iniquity: *David* tells us, that *his Delight was in the Excellent ones of the Earth, and ſuch as excel in Virtue; but for him that telleth Lies, and delighteth in Wickedneſs, his Soul abhorred*; Yea, he addeth in the 101 Pſalm, that, *He would not ſee a vile Perſon, and he that telleth Lies ſhould not tarry in his Sight*: which is a lively Inſtance to exemplify this Property of *Charity*, which *Rejoyceth not in Iniquity, but Rejoyceth in the Truth.*

Pſal. 16. 3.

To

To draw to a Concluſion, Let us, from what hath been ſaid, labour to be thus affected towards Vertue and Vice, to rejoyce in the one, and to reject the other. In order to which,

Let us often and ſeriouſly bethink our ſelves of the extream Folly and Danger of all ſinful Courſes; how hateful and diſpleaſing they are to God, who hath declar'd, that *He hath no Pleaſure in Wickedneſs, neither ſhall Evil dwell with him.* What unſpeakable Evils they bring upon us at preſent, both in Body and Mind; and how much greater Miſeries they will ſhortly plunge us into for ever; and this may help to work in us a Hatred and Abhorrence of them.

Next, Let us frequently meditate upon the exceeding great Excellency and Rewards of Vertue, how pleaſing it is in the Eyes both of God and Men; what unſpeakable Comfort and Satisfaction it gives us now, and what endleſs Peace and Tranquility, it will bring us to at laſt; and this may make us ſo enamour'd with it, as to delight in the Practice, and live in Expectation of the Reward of it. But above all, Let us put up our Prayers to Almighty God, that he would pour into our Hearts this moſt excellent Grace of *Charity*.

The PROPERTIES OF *CHARITY*: *It beareth all Things.*

1 Cor. XIII. 7.

Charity *beareth all Things.*

I Shew'd in my Laſt, how *Charity* wills us to be affected with Vice and Vertue, which is to hate the one, and love the other; and that, both in our ſelves and others, which is the Senſe of that Advice of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 12. 9. *Abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good.*

But becauſe all Sins are not alike, and there's a much greater Guilt and Heinouſneſs in ſome, than there is in others, both Reaſon and *Charity* too, will oblige

us to be differently affected towards them. And how that is,

The next Property of *Charity* will direct us; and that is contain'd in these Words, *Beareth all things.* In the Original it is πάντα στέγει, which signifies to bear with, cover and excuse all things as far as we may; and so 'tis oppos'd to censuring, divulging, and aggravating of others Failings. But for the better Understanding of this Act of *Charity*, I must,

First, Shew the different Nature, Kinds, and Degrees of Guilt in some Sins above others.

Secondly, How we are to be affected to the several Sorts of them.

Thirdly, That *Charity* will teach and direct us to be so. For the

First, We are to note, that tho' all Sin in general is the Transgression of a Law, either by omitting what it requires, or committing what it forbids, yet all such Transgressions are not equally heinous, nor carry the same Guilt, but admit of sundry Abatements or Aggravations from the several Circumstances that attend the committing of them; and these proceed, partly, from the Clearness or Dimness of the Light, by

which they are Acted. Thus Sins committed againſt Knowledge have a deeper Dye, than thoſe that are done out of Ignorance; and the Miſcarriages that proceed from a ſupine, affected Ignorance, occaſion'd by the Neglect or Contempt of Knowledge, are much greater, than where the Error is invincible, and no Means, or Opportunities are afforded of knowing better. Hence we find the Apoſtle making Abatement for ſome Men's
Acts. 17 30. Sins, by telling us, that *God wink'd at them in times of Ignorance:* And aggravating the Sins of others, *who knowing the Judg-*
Rom. 1. 30. *ment of God, that they who commit ſuch things are worthy of Death; not only do the ſame, but take Pleaſure in them that do them.*

But chiefly the greater or leſſer Degrees of Guilt in Sinning, proceed from the greater or leſs Conſent and Concurrence of the Will in doing of it. Thus he that falls into any Sin by Inadvertence, or Surprize, or is betray'd into it by Fear, or entic'd by a ſtrong Temptation, is far more Pityable, and leſs Guilty than he that does the ſame thing upon Deliberation, and Choice, without any of thoſe Motives and Temptations; and generally the more voluntary any Sin is, the more heinous,

Hence

Hence we find Sin commonly divided into Sins of Weakneſs, and Sins of Wilfulneſs; or which is all one, into Sins of Infirmity, and Sins of Preſumption.

Wilful and Preſumptuous Sins are ſuch as have the full Conſent of the Will in doing of them; that are committed with a high Hand, and with a bold Front; and perſiſted in againſt clear Light; againſt the Advice of Friends; againſt the Inſtruction of Teachers; and againſt many Promiſes, and Purpoſes of Amendment: Theſe having the full Bent and Inclination of the Will, beſpeak an evil Mind, and a Heart fully ſet in them to do Evil; and therefore, theſe carry a great Guilt and Heinouſneſs in them. Sins of Weakneſs and Infirmity, are ſuch as proceed from Ignorance or Incogitancy; from the Imbecility of Nature, or the Importunity of Temptation; when Men by the prevalence of Example, Fear, Paſſion, or the like, are unwittingly drawn into any Evil, beſide their ordinary Courſe or Intention; Theſe having a more faint and imperfect Compliance of the Will, have not ſo great a Guilt as the former; in reſpect of which they may be reckon'd only involuntary Failings.

Beſide theſe, there are many natural In-

firmities incident to the beſt Men in this Life; as a too great Remiſsneſs in our Duty; Wearineſs in God's Service; a fond Adherence to Earthly and Senſual Things; a Coldneſs and Indifference towards Spiritual and Divine Obiects; wandring Thoughts in Prayer, and the like: Such as theſe, will cling to us more or leſs, as long as we carry theſe Bodies about us, and converſe with Earthly things; and where they are not too much indulg'd, but watch'd againſt and repented of, will admit of great Allowances. Thus having ſhew'd the different Nature and Guilt of ſome Sins above others I proceed to ſhew,

Secondly, How we are to be affected towards them; and this we cannot better learn, than by conſidering how God Himſelf ſtands affected towards theſe different Sorts of Sins and Sinners. And

Firſt, As to wilful Sins and Sinners, little or no Favour or Indulgence is to be ſhew'd to them; for God-Almighty hath frequently declar'd his Hatred and Abhorrence of them, and thereby ſhew'd how little Regard, or rather how great Dislike we are to manifeſt towards them: *Solomon* tells us, that he *that covers, and excuſes theſe Sins ſhall not Proſper*: for

Prov. 28. 13.

'tis

'tis in vain to go about to hide them from God, who knoweth all things: and 'tis no leſs fooliſh to extenuate them before Men, who many times know and ſuffer under the Evil of them, and therefore cannot be kept from publiſhing the Shame, or preventing the Danger of them. *David* teaches us to Pray againſt them; *Keep thy Servant from Preſumptuous Sins, that they may not prevail over him.* Yea, we ought to be ſo far from bearing with, or excuſing ſuch Enormities, that we are rather to expoſe them to Shame and Puniſhment, to bring the Guilty to Repentance, and deter others from running into them. But, Pſal. 19. 13.

Secondly, As for Sins of Weakneſs, Infirmity, and daily Incurſion, great Abatements, or Allowances muſt be made; for theſe, proceeding many times from a Want of Knowledge, and having not the deliberate and full Conſent of the Will, are many times, but ignorant and involuntary Failings. Theſe we are not to publiſh or aggravate to the Diſgrace, or Diſheartning of any; but rather to excuſe, to cover, and to compaſſionate. We muſt not, with *Cham* diſcloſe, but hide another's Nakedneſs; Much leſs ſhould we trample upon, or triumph over our

Brother's Weakneſs: But rather Pity and Pardon what we may, and accept of true ſincere Deſires, tho' accompanied with weak and imperfect Endeavours.

Gal. 6. 1. *If any be over-taken in a Fault* (ſaith the Apoſtle) through Infirmity or Inadvertence, we muſt not inſult over, but pity his Weakneſs, and endeavour to *reſtore ſuch a one in the Spirit of Meekneſs*; we are to allow for the Strength of Temptation, and *conſider our ſelves, leſt we alſo be tempted*; we are to abate for Surprize, Inadvertence, and Forgetfulneſs, with many other Frailties, incident to our preſent State; and having taken out all aggravating Circumſtances, to interpret all things with Candor and Condeſcenſion.

Of this God Himſelf hath given us his own Example; for he conſiders our Weakneſs, and hath compaſſion upon our Infirmities; he doth not judge of us with Rigour and Extremity, or take all Advantages to Cenſure and Sentence us, but bears with our Frailties, and gives all the favourable Allowances we can reaſonably deſire.

Of this our Bleſſed Saviour hath likewiſe left us an admirable Example: for beſide the many Precepts given us of this kind, the Apoſtle acquaints us with his

Practice

Practice herein; which was, *that he had Compaſſion on the Ignorant:* and could reaſonably bear with them *that were out of the Way, being himſelf compaſſed with Infirmity.* Heb. 5. 2.

Now, tho' our Saviour's whole Life was one great Example of his Kindneſs, Candor, and Condeſcenſion to Mankind, yet I ſhall ſingle out two or three Inſtances of his Carriage towards Sinners, that may ſerve for a Direction of our Demeanor in this Matter. And the

Firſt, Shall be of his Mildneſs to Two of his Diſciples, who in a ſudden Fit of Anger, and Revenge, call'd for Fire from Heaven to conſume the Samaritans: Now, becauſe this proceeded from a Love of their Saviour, and a juſt Reſentment of the inhoſpitable Carriage of the Samaritans towards him, he accepted of the Good that was in them; and made a mild Interpretation of the Evil that accompanied it, by charging it wholly upon their Ignorance, or Unacquaintedneſs with their own Spirit, and the Spirit of Chriſtianity, which was, *Not to deſtroy Men's Lives, but to ſave them.* Luk. 9. 56. The

Second, Shall be his Carriage to Two other of his Diſciples, whom in the Anguiſh and Horror of his Agony, he deſir'd

to

to Watch with him one Hour, while he Pray'd to his Father to remove, or allay the Bitterneſs of that Cup, which he was to drink of for their Sake. Now, tho' ſo earneſt and reaſonable a Requeſt, and the many Obligations he had laid upon them, were ſufficient, one would think, to keep them awake much longer, on ſo weighty an Occaſion, yet they very unſeaſonably fell Aſleep, for which he only expoſtulated
Mark 14. 37. with them in theſe ſoft Words, *What could ye not watch with me one Hour?* And when after this mild Admonition, they fell Aſleep again, a Second, and a Third time, which we may ſuppoſe, did betray a great Coldneſs of Affection, and a wonderful Unconcernedneſs for his bitter Sufferings, yet he imputes all to no worſe a Cauſe than mere Weakneſs; and when they had nothing to ſay for Themſelves, he makes an Apology for them Himſelf,
Ver. 38. ſaying, *The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Fleſh is weak.* The

Third, and Laſt Inſtance I ſhall mention of his Lenity, ſhall be that of his Carriage to the Jews; when after all their loud Calumnies and Clamors for his Crucifixion, which were ſo Liable to be imputed to the Highth of Malice, Envy, and other inexcuſable Principles, he yet aſcribes

ſcribes to no worſe a Cauſe than mere Ignorance; Praying for them on the Croſs in theſe Words, *Father forgive them, they know not what they do:* By which and many other Inſtances that may be given, we ſee his exceeding great Propeneſs to put the beſt Conſtruction upon the worſt Actions, and being *touch'd with the Feeling of our Infirmities*, how ready he is to bear with and excuſe the greateſt of them. Luk. 23. 34.

Thus we ſee how we are to ſtand affected towards the ſeveral Kinds of Sin, and Sinners: From which I proceed,

Thirdly, To ſhew that *Charity* is that Grace, that teacheth us to be thus affected towards them: for our Text tells us, that *Charity beareth*, that is, covereth, concealeth, and as far as it well may, excuſeth *all things*; where *all things* muſt not be taken in that large Extent, as to include all Things without any Exception, as if it requir'd us never to expoſe, or lay open any Miſcarriages; no, ſuch an univerſal and ſuperabundant *Charity*, would be inconſiſtent with Juſtice, and prove an Encouragement to the vileſt Abominations: but All things here are to be taken (as they frequently are in Scripture) to ſignify a great Number, or all

all of such a Kind; and so 'tis the same with what the Apostle elsewhere tells us, 1 Pet. 4. 1. that *Love covereth a Multitude of Sins.* There are some Sins that have a pernicious Influence, both upon the publick and private Welfare, and these are rather to be expos'd than excus'd by us. God-Almighty declares as much his Justice, in Punishing some Sins, as his Mercy in Pardoning others; and hath will'd his Ministers to be *a Terror to Evil-Doers, as well as a Praise to them that Do well.* The Heb. 10. 26. Apostle speaks of some, *that are left without Excuse,* Namely, *such as Sin wilfully after they have receiv'd the Knowledge of the Truth.* And therefore, it would be Folly in us to go about to excuse them; Obstinate, and obdurate Offenders come not within the Allowances of *Charity,* but fall under the severer Rules of Justice; And 'tis a higher Act of *Charity* to Publish and Punish, than to Pardon and Conceal such Enormities.

But when *Charity* is said to *bear, cover, or excuse all things,* it must be understood of all such things as can reasonably admit of it. It is not forward to publish the Faults of others, unless where the Service of the Publick, and the Reformation of the Party, make it necessary: it does not

not delight to talk of others Failings to their Diſparagement, or Prejudice; But rather caſts a Veil to cover and hide their Infirmities: It does not aggravate, or make the worſt of a bad Action, but gives all the Grains of Allowance it can well bear; it will not find Fault where there is none, nor highten it where it is, either by adding any Circumſtance to encreaſe the Guilt, or concealing any, that may help to leſſen and diminiſh it, but weighs and judges all things by the favourable Meaſures of Equity and Candor. *Charity* will not aſcribe that to Wilfulneſs and Preſumption, that is done Unwittingly; nor impute that to Deliberation and Deſign, that came to paſs by Surprize, and beſide the Intention; In a Word, *Charity covereth a Multitude of Sins,* and rather extenuates than enhanceth the Guilt of all involuntary Miſcarriages. This is ſo natural and conſtant an Effect of Love, that 'tis ſeldom or never ſeparated from it. We know how willing we are to hide the Infirmities of a Father, or a Friend; and how ready upon all Occaſions, to make the beſt Excuſes and Apologies we can, for ſuch as we truly Love: Now *Charity* extends this to all Mankind, whom we are

to

to treat as Friends, and Love as Brethren; bearing with their Failings, and overlooking too their greater Guilts, where they are truly Repented of and Reform'd.

But will not this embolden Men in their Vices and Wickedneſs, to find Mankind oblig'd to bear with, and conceal them; and will they not complain for Want of *Charity* where 'tis otherwiſe? No, all ingenuous Natures will be the more afraid and aſham'd to offend, where they find ſo much Tenderneſs and *Charity*. And for others, that make ſo bad a Uſe of Lenity, and Forbearance, *Charity* is better ſeen in puniſhing, than in bearing with them: And when their own Conſciences ſmite them for their Guilt, they will ſee more of Love, than want of *Charity*, in thoſe rougher Methods of reclaiming them.

Thus I have open'd to you this Property of *Charity* that *beareth all things*: ſhewing how far we are to bear with, cover or excuſe the Miſcarriages of one another.

For a Cloſe, We may hence take Occaſion to Lament the Lack of this Piece of *Charity* in the World; for how backward are Men to bear with, and conceal the

the Failings of each other? and how forward are they to divulge and cenſure them upon all Occaſions? Yea, how frequent is it, inſtead of leſſening, to aggravate the Faults of others, and many times to highten them beyond the Proportion of the Guilt? when they ſhould pity, and cover, they delight to blazon their Infirmities; and inſtead of hiding the Faults, hide only the Circumſtances that might excuſe it. Tho' there is ſcarce any thing more oppoſite to *Charity*, and more ſtrictly forbidden in holy Scripture, than ſpeaking Evil of one another; yet Evil-ſpeaking is almoſt as common as Speaking; and other Men's Miſcarriages is the uſual Theme and Topick of Diſcourſe in moſt Companies. You may obſerve ſome, that pretend to greater Strictneſs than other Men, to delight in nothing more, than in talking of others Looſeneſs: If they have gotten a bad Story of one they do not like, they ſhall carry it about with an inward Delight, and take more Pleaſure in relating it, than the Epicure does in the greateſt Luxuries; Theſe build their own Fame upon the Ruin of others, and prove they have more Religion, only by their having leſs *Charity* than other Men.

Again,

Again, 'Tis not unuſual with ſome Men, who have miſtaken Notions of ſome Pieces of *Charity*, to complain of the Lack of it in others, who perhaps, have a truer Senſe, and more of it than Themſelves: And, as *Diogenes* trampled upon the Pride of *Plato*, with greater Pride of his own; ſo, theſe blame the Want of *Charity* in others, with much greater Uncharitableneſs.

To conclude then this Particular, Let us learn from what has been ſaid to bear with, cover and excuſe, as far as we may, the Failings of one another. This is what we all hope for from God-Almighty; that he will Pity and Pardon our Infirmities; Not Judging us with Rigour, but conſidering our Weakneſs, and making Allowance for all our involuntary Errors. And if we expect this favourable Dealing at the Hands of God, we muſt be ready to do the ſame to our Fellow-Creatures, otherwiſe we *ſhall have Judgment without Mercy, if we ſhew no Mercy.*

This is no more than we all need and deſire from other Men, to bear with us, to abate for Infirmities, and put the beſt Conſtruction upon all our Actions: And the Golden Rule, Of Doing to others as

we

we would be Done by ourſelves, will oblige us to do the Same; by obſerving whereof we ſhall attract the Favour of God and Man, and receive the Reward of that *Charity, that beareth all things.*

The PROPERTIES OF CHARITY: *It believeth all Things.*

1 Cor. XIII. 7.

Charity *believeth all Things.*

WE have seen that Act of *Charity*, which consists in covering the Evil, and excusing, as much as we may, the Failings of Mankind, expres's'd here by *Beareth all things.* I come now to the

Next Property of *Charity*, which teaches us to believe all the Good we can of them, and to commend all that is Praise-worthy; here in these Words, *Believeth all things.* In the Original it is πάντα πιστεύει, which signifies a Willingness to hear and believe the

the Beſt. In treating therefore hereof I muſt,

Firſt, Explain the Senſe and Meaning of the Expreſſion.

Secondly, Confirm the Truth of it. And,

Laſtly, Shew the Uſe we are to make of it.

Firſt, Then, What are we to underſtand here by Believing all things? in Anſwer whereunto we muſt note, that *All things* here, muſt not be taken in the utmoſt Latitude; *viz.* for all Perſons, and all Kinds of Things; for many are falſe, malicious and ill-grounded, and ſo not fit to be hearken'd to, or receiv'd. Nor,

By Believing here, are we to underſtand an eaſy and fond Credulity, which makes Men ſwallow all that they hear, and believe every thing that is told them; for this would oblige them, many times, to *believe Lies*, and lead them into many and dangerous Miſtakes: But *All things* here, are meant of all things Credible, all that is fit to be Believ'd, and worthy of Acceptation, that *Charity* makes us willing to lend an Ear to, and ready to receive.

But for the better Underſtanding hereof, we may note farther, that the Things to be Believ'd, are either Matters of Re-

ligion, or Matters of common and civil Converſation; and how far we are obliged to believe, what is told us in both theſe, is a Caſe well worth our Enquiry after.

Firſt then Negatively, *Charity* does not require us to believe all that we hear in Matters of Religion; for *many falſe*
1 Joh. 4 1. *Prophets are gone abroad in the World*, Who endeavour to vent and ſpread divers pernicious and damnable Errors; Our Saviour hath forewarn'd us, that many would come in his Name, ſaying, *Lo here is*
Mat. 24. 24. *Chriſt*, and *Lo there*, and deceive many; and therefore bids us believe them Not: St. *John* wills us not to *Believe every Spirit, but to try the Spirits, whether they be of God.* Deceivers often impoſe upon the Faith, and abuſe the Credulity of the Vulgar; We read of ſome, *Who creep in-*
2 Tim. 3. 6. *to Houſes, and lead Captive ſilly Women*: And of others, *who by good Words and fair Speeches deceive the Hearts of the ſimple*: And the Apoſtle minds us of ſome *unruly and vain Talkers and Deceivers, who ſpeak*
Tit. 1. 10, 11. *things that they ought not, for filthy Lucre's Sake.* Now *Charity* does not direct us to believe theſe lying Spirits, or to abett, countenance, or any Way encourage ſuch falſe Teachers: Yea, That true *Cha-*

rity

rity we owe to our ſelves and others, wills us to turn away from them, and to reject both their Perſons and Doctrines. And as we are not bound to *believe all things* in Religion; ſo neither,

Secondly, Does *Charity* oblige us to *believe all things* in civil Converſation: for many falſe Reports are invented by Malice, and ſpread upon Deſign; and to hearken to them will lead into great Miſtakes, and deſtroy all Love and Friendſhip amongſt Men. *The Tale-bearer* (ſaith *Solomon*) *ſeparateth good Friends, his Words are like the Piercings of a Sword, or as Wounds, that reach the innermoſt Parts of the Belly.* And they that hearken to, and believe Lies and Slanders, are Partakers of the Sin, and become Acceſſary to all the Miſchief occaſion'd by it. So that 'tis plain, *Charity* does not require us to *believe all things*, either in Religion or civil Converſation: For to be too credulous and eaſy of Belief, is the ready Way to be deceiv'd in Both; The Love we bear to our own Souls, directs us to weigh and conſider well the Truths of Religion; and the Love we owe to our Neighbour, wills us to be well adviſ'd of the Truth of the Reports that concern Him: And to be haſty of Belief in either, betrays a

Pro. 12. 18.

Pro. 18. 8.

Want of Judgment, and *Charity* in both. But,

How then are we to understand this Property of *Charity*, which the Apostle tells us, *Believeth all things*? Why, This must be understood of all things that have any reasonable or probable Ground of Belief: And where Matters are any Way doubtful or uncertain, their Submission to Superiors, and *Charity* to Equals, must turn the Scale, and teach us to Believe the Best.

But to speak more plainly and particularly;

First, We are to *believe all things* that are clearly and expressly Reveal'd in Holy Scripture, being deliver'd to us by the Authority of God-Almighty, and depending upon his Testimony, who is Truth it Self; And where any Matters seem more obscurely Reveal'd, and by Reason of different Senses appear more difficult and doubtful, there *Charity*, which evermore includes an humble and modest Opinion of our selves, requires us to yield to the Power and Wisdom of our Superiors, who are intrusted with the Ordinances and Oracles of God, and are the best Interpreters of both; and therefore ought to sway us in such Cases.

Secondly,

Secondly, In Matters of human Commerce and Converſation, *Charity* requires us to believe all the Good we can of others, where there is no apparent Reaſon to the contrary; it inclines us more to believe Good than Evil of them; to commend all that we find any ways Praiſe-worthy; and to ſpeak of it too, where it may be of any Uſe and Advantage to them. If any thing be amiſs in any, *Charity* is not forward to trumpet and proclaim it Abroad, as the Manner of ſome is, but is willing to hear, and believe all that may be ſaid in Excuſe or Mitigation of it. 'Tis one of the Properties of that *Wiſdom that is from above, that 'tis eaſy to be perſwaded*; That is, 'tis Jam. 3. 17. ready to believe any Good of another, and to hearken to all that may be alledg'd to leſſen and alleviate a Fault.

Charity, indeed, does not will us to *call Evil Good*; to Commend any one falſely, or to give any Encouragement to Vice, by a too eaſy and candid Repreſentation of it: No, nor make us wanting in our Duty of warning and rebuking any, whom we find guilty of notorious Offences; Much leſs will it keep Men from Speaking the Truth of Perſons, when it is for their own, or others Good

to discover it; No, it will not falsify to befriend any, nor conceal the Truth, where it is any Ways Necessary to reveal it: But *Charity* wills us, to give the most favourable Character we can of other Men; and to represent all Things, as much to their Advantage, as we well may.

Moreover, Where any Matters admit of a double Construction; *viz.* the one Good, and the other Bad; *Charity* obliges us to take the Best. 'Twas the Observation of a wise Heathen, that every thing hath two Handles, and that Malice and Envy commonly take Hold of the worst, and weakest Handle, but Virtue and Goodness always incline to the better Side, and make (as we say) the Best of a bad Matter.

Again, As there is no Man, how Good soever, but hath in him some Mixture of Evil, so there is scarce any so Bad, but hath something or other of Good in him.

Now Envy and Ill-Will, commonly overlook all that is Good in Both, and fasten only upon what is Evil; and not only so, but delight to publish and aggravate it, not to amend, but to undermine and disparage them: Whereas *Charity* on the other hand, overlooks the Evil, as

far

far as poſſible, and pitches upon the Good to commend and encourage it: 'twill caſt a Veil over the Infirmities and Failings of our Brethren, and gladly hear any thing that may be ſaid for their Defence, and chuſes rather to take Notice of what is Good and Commendable in them, than what is otherwiſe; This is what the Apoſtle here means by *Believing all things.* But will not this tend to make Men careleſs of their Ways, when they find others oblig'd, not only to excuſe but to commend what they do? I anſwer,

They that make ſo bad a Uſe of the kinder Offices of *Charity*, juſtly forfeit all Title to them; and the rougher Methods of Admonition and Correction, which are not only conſiſtent with, but requir'd by *Charity*, may, and ought to be us'd to awaken and reclaim them.

However, the Judgment of *Charity* is large and comprehenſive; it takes in all, and believes the Beſt it can of every one; it will not raſhly charge Guilt upon any, but puts the beſt Conſtruction upon every thing, it can admit of: In a word, it believes all things poſſible, or probable; and gives all the Credit and Allowance that may be, with a ſafe and upright Conſcience.

But

But how does this appear to be the Property of *Charity*? why, partly from the Nature of the Virtue, and partly from the Experience of thoſe, in whom it dwells. For the

Firſt, Charity is evermore attended with Faith towards God, and Love towards Men: Which the Apoſtle ſtyles, a *Faith that works by Love*: And theſe will direct us to *believe all things* aright concerning Both: Faith in God, will regulate our Belief in all ſacred Matters, and teach us to believe all that he hath reveal'd to us in his Word, being all founded on the Authority and unerring Teſtimony of Him, Who can neither be deceiv'd Himſelf, or deceive others.

Love to Mankind will naturally diſpoſe us to believe all the Good we poſſible may of them, and to think well, where we have any probable Ground for it, or no juſt or apparent Reaſon to the contrary; for tho' Ill-Will (we ſay) never ſpeaks well, yet *Charity* and Good-Will, covereth a Multitude of Faults, and evermore thinks and ſpeaks the Beſt. 'Tis a known Saying, grounded upon long Obſervation, That Men eaſily believe what they deſire and wiſh to be True; and therefore, *Charity*, being a Wiſhing-

well

well to all Men, muſt needs diſpoſe us to Believe well of them likewiſe; This every one's Experience may eaſily convince him of. We know how backward we are to find Faults, where we truly Love, and how forward to commend any thing, that carries any Show of Good. How loth is a Parent to Believe ill of his Child? How unwilling is one Friend to hear or believe ill of another? How ready are all Men to publiſh the juſt Praiſes of thoſe to whom they bear a real Affection, and likewiſe to hide any thing that may tend to eclypſe them?

And when we ſtand thus affected towards all Men, whom we ſhould Love, as Brethren, then have we learnt this excellent Property of *Charity*, which our Apoſtle here tells us, *Believeth all things.*

From what has been ſaid on this Head, we may obſerve,

Firſt, How much this excellent Grace conduces to the Eaſe, the Comfort, and the Happineſs of Mankind: the Angels at the Nativity of our Lord, next to the Glory of God, proclaim'd, *Peace on Earth, and Good-will towards Men*, as the Great Means and Inſtruments of their Happineſs; and to let them know, that the Birth of a Saviour could not make them

Happy

Happy without them. Yea, Christ came into the World on purpose to plant these Virtues among us, both by his Doctrine and Example. How many Precepts hath he given us to Love and *Charity*; exhorting us to bear with, to forbear, to forgive, and to be kindly affection'd to one another? And what an unparalel'd Pattern he hath left us Himself, of these things? particularly as to this Branch of *Charity*, which consists in concealing the Bad, and commending the Good we find in any others. How many Instances may we read of it in the New Testament? Where He found in any the least Measure of Faith or Love to Him, He always accepted and commended it; and for the Sake of that, overlook'd many other Miscarriages; Yea, where He found nothing of either, He forgave the greatest Indignities, and pray'd for his bittrest Enemies: He ever put the best Construction upon all things, that were done for, or against Him; If any good Office were done for Him or His, how ready was He to commend and reward it? A Cup of cold Water to Him, or any of his Disciples, did not miss of a Reward: If any thing was done against Him, none was more ready to excuse and forgive it: And where any thing would admit

admit of a favourable Conſtruction, it was ſure to find it. How eaſy might Men live by one another, if this Piece of *Charity* were more frequently practis'd? the World would then be full of quiet Habitations; and Men, inſtead of Troubling and Cenſuring, would be a Help and Comfort to one another.

Secondly, We learn from hence the Riſe or Occaſion of many of the Troubles and Uneaſineſſes of human Life, which proceed in a great Meaſure, from the Lack of this Candor and *Charity*. For, whilſt Men interpret the Words and Actions of others, in the worſt Senſe; being loth to believe any good of them, and forward to believe any manner of Evil; whilſt they paſs by all the good Conſtructions, that any thing may admit of, and pick out all the Circumſtances that may blacken and miſ-repreſent it, 'tis no Wonder if they entertain hard Thoughts, and vent hard Speeches of one another; and yet this is the Guiſe and Practice of too many, who take every thing by the worſt Handle, and inſtead of laying hold on, what may be for the Credit and Advantage of another, will be ſure to faſten on ſomething, that may tend to his Detriment, or Diſhonour;

and

and ſo too often grieve thoſe with their Cenſures, whom they ſhould relieve with their *Charity*: Indeed, as *Charity*, ſo Envy too, *Believeth all things*, tho' in a very different Senſe; the One believeth all the Good, the other all the Evil it can of other Men: The One, like the Bee, gathers Honey, the Other, like the Spider ſucks Poyſon out of every Flower: And as to think, and ſpeak well of one another, conduces much to the Eaſe and Comfort of Mankind, ſo to do otherwiſe is a great Occaſion of Diſquiet and Diſcomfort to them.



The

The PROPERTIES OF CHARITY: *It hopeth all Things.*

1 Cor. XIII. 7.

Charity *Hopeth all Things.*

HAVING ſpoken of that Office of *Charity*, that teaches us to believe all the Good we can of others, expreſs'd here by *believing all things*, I proceed now to the next Property of it, which will incline us to Hope the beſt of them; and this is contain'd in theſe Words, *Hopeth all things*: In the Original it is πάντα ἐλπίζει, which implies ſuch a Deſire of Good to others, that is accompanied with ſome good Grounds to expect it, for elſe 'tis not Hope, but Folly and Preſumption.

For

For the better Understanding of this Act of *Charity*, I must

First, Explain to you the Nature of Hope, and then shew what things we are to Hope, in relation to others.

For the First, Hope is a Passion of the Soul, that inclines it to desire and endeavour for some possible and absent Good; I call it a Passion of the Soul, because 'tis seated within, and evermore springs from an inward Principle; 'tis an Act of the rational Soul, because it always supposes Knowledge; for none can Hope for what he does not Know: And therefore Brute Beasts, that have no Knowledge or Foresight of things, Can have no Hope; but being acted wholly by Sense, are affected only with present things; without Hoping for any thing further. Again,

I style it such a Passion of the Soul, that inclines it to desire something; for where there is no Desire, there can be no Hope, which always springs from some Love or Liking to the thing Hop'd for. Moreover,

Desire must be accompanied with some Endeavours after it, else 'tis not so properly Hope, as Rashness and Presumption.

Lastly,

Laſtly, For the Object of Hope, it muſt be,

Firſt, Something that is Good, or at leaſt thought ſo; for where a thing is either really or ſuppos'd to be Evil, it becomes rather the Object of Fear than Hope.

Secondly, It muſt be ſomething that is poſſible; for where a thing is either in it ſelf, or in the Apprehenſion, impoſſible, there it will be Deſpair'd of, not Hop'd for.

Thirdly, The thing muſt be not only poſſible, but muſt carry likewiſe ſome Degree of Probability, otherwiſe the Hopes of it will be very weak and faint, if any at all.

Laſtly, The Object of Hope muſt be ſomething that is abſent, or future; for what is preſent and in poſſeſſion, is the Object of Joy and Enjoyment, not of Hope; for *Hope that is ſeen* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *is not Hope; for what a Man ſeeth, why doth he yet hope for? but if we Hope for that we ſee not, then do we with Patience wait for it.* Thus we ſee briefly ſomething of the Nature, and Object of Hope; ſo that when *Charity* is here ſaid to Hope, it implies ſome Deſires and Endeavours after the thing Hoped for; and when 'tis ſaid, Rom. 8. 24, 25.

it *Hopeth all things*; it muſt not be underſtood univerſally of all things without Exception, whether Good or Bad, Abſent or Preſent, Poſſible or Impoſſible; but in a more qualified Senſe, of all things of ſuch a Kind, all things that are worthy of our Deſires, and fit to be Hoped for.

But what are the things that *Charity* here wills us to Hope for, in the Behalf of others? Why chiefly theſe Three things:

Firſt, The Continuance and Encreaſe of all that is Good in them.

Secondly, The Amendment and Reformation of what is Evil.

Thirdly, Their future Happineſs and Salvation in the World to come; And conſequently, it forbids all deſpairing of Sinners Amendment here, or of their Salvation hereafter.

The Handling of theſe few things will ſhew us the Senſe of this Branch of *Charity*, which *Hopeth all things*.

Firſt, I ſay, it wills us to Hope for the Continuance and Encreaſe of all that is Good in other Men; there is ſcarce any Man (as was before obſerv'd) ſo Bad but hath ſome Good Quality or other in him; and very few are ſo far abandon'd to Luſt and Wickedneſs, as to have no

Spark

Spark of Grace or Goodneſs left in them: Now here *Charity*, paſſing by the Evil, Hopes and Prays for the Continuance of what is Good; and not only ſo, but that it may daily encreaſe more and more, and the Good ſo far get Ground, as to overcome the Evil: Bad Men may ſome times ſhew a Liking to Virtue, and be taken both with the Beauty and Dowry of Holineſs. Now *Charity* improves this to the beſt Advantage, and not only Hopes, but promotes, and prays for a Good Effect of it upon them; that he who hath promiſed not to *Quench the ſmoaking Flax*, will enliven theſe Sparks, and blow them up into a greater Flame of Piety and Devotion; It cheriſhes this Good in them, and conceives thence ſome Hopes of their farther advancing in it.

Secondly, Charity hopes not only for the Improvment of what is Good, but for the Amendment and Reformation of what is Evil in them; that they may be more ſenſible of the Error, and Evil of their Ways, and be thereby perſwaded in time, to turn from them: Bad Men may ſhew ſometimes, as, a Liking to Virtue, ſo, a Loathing of Vice, and from the many Inconveniences they feel by it, may take up Good Purpoſes and Reſo-

lutions of Amendment: Now here too, *Charity*, which ever wiſhes and thinks the beſt, will conceive ſome Hopes of their growing Better; and becauſe Hopes without ſome Endeavours are vain and uſeleſs, it will not be wanting by Counſel, Reproof, and other Good Means, to forward their Reformation; not ceaſing to pray unto God for them, that he, who will not break *the bruiſed Reed*, would ſtrengthen their Weakneſs, and enable them, by the Power of his Grace, to pay their Vows, and perform their Holy Purpoſes.

Thirdly, Charity Hopes for the Happineſs and Salvation of all Men: as God delights not in the Death of a Sinner, ſo a Good Man takes no Pleaſure in the Deſtruction of any; but rather Hopes and Wiſhes for the Salvation of all: He is ſo tenderly affected to Mankind that (with our Bleſſed Saviour) would not, that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to him and have everlaſting Life. St. *Paul* declares, that *His Heart's*
Ro. 10. 1. *Deſire, and Prayer to God for Iſrael, was, that they might be ſav'd*: So ought we to be affected to all our Brethren, according to the Fleſh; to Hope and Pray for their eternal Happineſs and Salvation. This,

the

the excellent Grace of *Charity* teaches us, which, being a Wiſhing-well to all Men, will not fail to deſire this, which is the greateſt Good we can wiſh them. In ſhort, this is the Height of our Hopes, both for our Selves and Others: 'tis the Top and Conſummation of all our Wiſhes; and therefore, next to the Glory of God, ought to be the principal Aim and Scope of all our Actions.

Thus Charity *Hopeth all things.* Namely, all things that God hath Promis'd, and that Mankind Needeth; teaching us to wait with Patience the Accompliſhment of them, both to our Selves and Others; by which it appears,

Firſt, That *Charity* forbids us to give up any for loſt, or to deſpair of the Amendment and Repentance of the greateſt Sinners; whilſt there is Life we ſay there is Hope; and whilſt any have, or uſe the Means of Grace, we have no Reaſon to caſt off all Hopes of them. There are many Examples in holy Scripture of Great Sinners, that became Great Saints: St. *Paul*, from a Perſecutor, became an Apoſtle and an eminent Servant of Chriſt; and we have known and read of many, who from looſe and vicious Lives, have become great Examples of Piety and Vir-

tue. The penitent Thief Repented on the Croſs; and tho' this be no Encouragement to any to go on in their Sins, or to deferr their Repentance, yet is it a firm Foundation of Hope; And *Charity*, that *Hopeth all things*, will not ſuffer us to deſpair of the Repentance of any.

And *Secondly*, As we may not deſpair of the Repentance of any, but wait patiently in the Uſe of all Good Means for their Amendment, ſo neither are we to deſpair of their Salvation, or judge hardly of their final State: for theſe things are out of our Sphere; and therefore, ought not to fall under our Cenſure or Cognizance: Our *Charity* ſhould extend as far as God's Mercy over all his Works; and where he vouchſafes the one, we ſhould not with-draw the other: we may not ſit in Judgment upon our Brethren; or paſs a Reprobating Sentence on any, that live or dy within the Pales of the Church. *Who made thee a Judge?* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *and who art thou that Judgeſt another Man's Servant? to his own Maſter he ſtandeth or falleth:* Our Saviour's Caution, *Judge not, that Ye be not judged*, ſhould make us afraid to invade God's Tribunal; and we ſhould tremble at every hard Thought of another, knowing,

Rom. 14. 4.

ing, *that with what Meaſure we mete, it ſhall be meaſur'd to us again.* Charity Mat. 7. 1, 2.
therefore Hopeth the beſt of all Men; it will not paſs Sentence on the very Heathens, but leaves them to the Favour and Mercy of God, who is no ſuch *hard Maſter, as to expect to reap, where he hath not ſow'd, or to gather, where he hath not ſtraw'd.*

And herein, as in all other Particulars, our Church hath wiſely obſerv'd the Rules of *Charity*, which *Hopeth all things*; for it contents it ſelf with propounding a ſure and ſafe Way to Heaven, to all its Members, without denouncing Anathema's, or excluding any others from the Hopes of Salvation; and as it Wiſhes well, ſo does it Hope the beſt of all Men. I know, She hath been blam'd by ſome, for too much *Charity*, but 'tis only by thoſe who have apparently too little; to wit, the Romaniſts on the one hand, and the Sectaries on the other. The former, exclude all thoſe from Salvation, that cannot aſſent to, and embrace all their Errors:

The latter, confine Heaven to a Party, Sainting thoſe of their own Sect, and Reprobating others that go not their Way; and both of them prove their own Way

beſt, by a very bad Argument, becauſe they have leaſt *Charity*.

Whereas the Church of *England*, allowing for the Ignorances, and Infirmities of Mankind, and thereby believing and hoping the beſt of all Men, hath carefully avoided the Uncharitableneſs of both.

But ſome would accuſe our Church of being too large and liberal in her *Charity*, becauſe in the Burial of the Dead, it interrs all Perſons, *in ſure and certain Hope of the Reſurrection to eternal Life*; And in the ſame Office declares its *Hope* of every Brother departing this Life, that he *ſleeps in the Lord Jeſus*. And does not this Rule of *Charity* teach us to do ſo? We know not certainly the State and Condition of particular Perſons; nor have we Authority to determine any thing about it. We cannot diſcern betwixt thoſe that Die in their Sins, and thoſe that Die in the Lord Jeſus; and cannot tell how far the deceas'd Party repented before, and in his Sickneſs; or at the Hour of Death; and where we are thus ignorant and doubtful, is it not the ſafeſt Way to believe, hope, and ſpeak the Beſt?

We pretend to no Aſſurance of any, it goes no higher than Hope, which implies

no

no Certainty; and this the Judgment of *Charity* requires to all that dy in the Communion of the Church. Does it become us to Judge any before the Time? or to make a Separation before the final Sentence? Is it not much more fit for us to be Modeſt and Charitable, and to leave theſe things to the juſt and certain Deciſion of the Laſt Day? 'Tis an old Saying, *De Mortuis, Nil niſi Bonum*, Speak nothing but Good of the Dead. Our Bleſſed Saviour check'd thoſe bold Cenſurers, that thought and ſpake hardly of them upon whom the Tower in *Siloam* fell: And none but thoſe who take Pleaſure in Reviling the Living, will blame the *Charity* of Hoping well of the Dead. Luk. 13. 4.

In ſhort then, To ſumm up the Senſe of this Property of *Charity*, that *Hopeth all things*: It implies ſomething

Firſt, In Reſpect of God; and that is an earneſt Expectation of the Accompliſhment of all his Promiſes, or the making good of all that he hath encouraged us to believe and hope for.

Secondly, Something relating to our Selves; which is the Truſting Him with all our Affairs, and a chearful Reliance upon

upon his Goodneſs, for the Supply of all our Wants. And,

Laſtly, Something in reſpect to our Neighbour; which is, even in the worſt Circumſtances, to wait for his Repentance, and to Hope the beſt of him, both Living and Dead.

It remains then, that we obſerve and practice this good Office of *Charity*, in all theſe Reſpects; placing our chiefeſt Hope in God, in the greateſt Extremities; which is *the Anchor of the Soul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt*, That will keep us from fluctuating in Doubts, and fix our Faith upon the firm Baſis of the Divine Power and Goodneſs.

Heb. 6. 19.

Next, Let us entertain the beſt Hopes we can of an erring Brother; uſing all Good Means to reclaim him from his ſinful Courſes; knowing, that *He that turneth a Sinner from the Error of his Ways, ſhall ſave a Soul from Death, and ſhall cover a Multitude of Sins*: Let us not caſt off our Confidence in God, nor deſiſt from our Prayers and Endeavours for the greateſt Sinners, knowing that his Grace is ſufficient to ſubdue and pardon the greateſt Offences, and the Greatneſs of our Sins ſerve to illuſtrate the Glory, and Greatneſs of his Mercy. In

Jam. 5. 20.

In a Word, Let us deſpair of none, but hope, expect, and deſire the Reforma- and Happineſs of all Men; ſo ſhall we learn this excellent Piece of *Charity*, which we are here told, *Hopeth all things.*



The

The PROPERTIES OF CHARITY: *It endureth all Things.*

1 Cor. XIII. 7.

Charity *endureth all Things.*

THIS is the laſt, tho' none of the leaſt Property of *Charity*: The Apoſtle, in the Deſcription of this excellent Grace, begins it with, *Suffereth long*; continues it with, *Beareth all things*; and ends it with, *Endureth all things*; to let us know, that the whole Courſe of Human Life, from firſt to laſt, is but one continued Scene of Suffering; we enter upon it Crying, and take Poſſeſſion with our Tears: we carry it on with Care and Sorrow, and *go on our way Weeping*;

Weeping; and we close it up with Sighs and Groans. This is the present State and Condition of Human Life, in which *we have need of Patience, that after we have done and suffer'd all, we may receive the Promise.* Heb. 10. 36.

But how may we distinguish these several Acts of *Charity*, by which 'tis said to *suffer*, *bear*, and *endure all things*? that these import different things is evident; because the Apostle, in so brief a Description of this Virtue, would not multiply many Words to express the same thing, or in so short a Summary, use any vain and needless Repetitions.

In Answer therefore hereunto, these several Acts are to be distinguish'd from each other, by the several Objects, about which they are conversant.

The first, respects the Wrongs and Injuries we receive at the Hands of Men; in relation to which this Virtue teaches us to *suffer long*, and not to be presently mov'd to Reparation or Revenge.

The next, respects the Failings and Infirmities of Mankind, which it requires us to *Bear with*, and conceal, as far as may be consistent with their Welfare and Amendment of the Persons, and the Publick Good. The last, regards chiefly the Afflictions

Afflictions and Calamities of this preſent Life, in reſpect of which 'tis here ſaid *to endure all things*. In the Original it is πάντα ὑπομένει, which ſignifies not only Patience but Perſeverance, and wills us to go on with Courage, both in doing Good, and bearing Evil, not fainting or tireing in our Chriſtian Courſe, but holding out to the End, whatever Troubles or Difficulties we may meet with, or under go in it. For the better handling of this Property of *Charity*, we muſt obſerve

Firſt, The great Difficulties that may, and often do attend the Practice of Virtue and Religion.

Secondly, The aptneſs of too many to be diſcouraged and diverted by them.

Thirdly, The uſefulneſs of this Grace, in order to the enduring and over-coming of them. For the

Firſt, That many Troubles and Difficulties attend the Practice of Virtue, and Religion, is a Truth ſo well known, and felt too by ſad Experience, that 'twill need no other Proof; *many are the Troubles of the Righteous*, (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) who had himſelf a very large Share of them. *Man is born to Trouble* (ſaith *Job*) *as the Sparks fly upward*; he too was try'd in the Furnace of Affliction, from whence

Pſ. 34. 19.

Job 5. 7.

the

the Sparks fly up; and as light Bodies naturally aſcend, ſo Heavineſs and Sorrow as naturally deſcend, and light upon us; Of this our Bleſſed Saviour forewarn'd his Followers, that they might be forearm'd againſt them: *In the World* (ſaith he) *ye ſhall have Tribulation*; and elſewhere, *Marvel not if the World hate you, for it hated me before it hateth you.* 1 John 3. 13. John 16. 33.

He did not flatter them with the Hopes of Eaſe and Proſperity, which are apt to make Men forgetful and ſecure; no, he bid them to expect Trouble and Tribulation here, to keep them mindful of their Duty, and prepare them for a better Country.

They that will live Godly in Chriſt Jeſus, (ſaith the Apoſtle) *muſt ſuffer Perſecutions*; the Ways of Virtue lie ſo contrary to thoſe of the World, that 'tis no Wonder if we meet with Trouble and Difficulties in them: And if we had no other Trials and Temptations, than what proceed from thence, we ſhall find a great Stock of Patience neceſſary to bear them, and of Courage to withſtand them. 2 Tim 3. 12.

But beſide theſe ordinary Difficulties, we may be ſometimes call'd to take up the Croſs, and to follow our Saviour, in

the

the deep and dark Ways of Suffering and Perſecution; and then a World of Patience will be neceſſary to endure all that Miſery, Reproach, and Pain, we muſt unavoidably undergo.

Troubles then and Afflictions muſt be expected in our Way to Heaven, for the Trial of our Patience, and the Exerciſe of our Faith and Conſtancy.

But what Influence are theſe wont to have upon the Minds and Practices of Men? Or what Uſe do the Generality of Mankind make of them? Why this is the

Next thing to be obſerv'd, *(viz.)* The great Aptneſs of too many to be diſcouraged and turn'd from their Duty by them; Some decline the Ways of Religion, for Fear of Sufferings; Others deſert them after they are engag'd in them, upon the Account of theſe things; and both of them prefer their own Eaſe and Worldly Intereſt, before the Glory of God, and the Salvation of their Souls. We read of ſome in the Goſpel, that *follow'd our Saviour only for the Loaves*; theſe ſtuck to him while He continu'd to feed and fa-
Mat. 13. 21. vour them, but if any *Trouble or Perſecution aroſe, by reaſon of the Word, by and by they were offended*: they could walk with-

in

in the Sunshine of Prosperity, whilst they partook of the Influences of his Bounty, but when the Clouds began to gather and threaten a Storm, they left him *and walk'd no more with him*: And 'tis but too common still, for some Persons to make a fair Show of Religion, and with *Herod*, Mark 6. to *hear and do many things gladly*, whilst 20. it interferes not with their Lusts and corrupt Designs; but when it seems to cross their Interest, Honour, or Pleasure, they grow uneasie under it, and will hear and practice no more of it; these are nice and delicate Christians, that cannot bear the smallest Sense of Trouble, but fly off upon the least Approach or Apprehension of it.

Now *Charity*, which *endureth all things*, is the best Remedy against this Inconstancy; for it adds Strength and Stability to the Mind, and enables it, not only to encounter, but overcome the greatest Difficulties; 'twill keep it firm to all Parts of our Duty in the worst of Times, and fortifie it against all Discouragements and Temptations to the contrary.

This will be evident, by considering the Three great Branches of this Virtue, *viz.* as it comprehends the Love of God, our Neighbour, and our Selves; in all

which we ſhall ſtand firm and unmoveable upon the Center of *Charity*: For this will keep us from being weary or wavering in any of theſe, and will not ſuffer us, to be either allur'd or affrighted from our Duty to either, as will appear by conſidering each of them. And,

Firſt, The Love of God will enable us to *endure all things*, that may tend to the promoting of his Glory, and the preventing of his Diſhonour: *I can do all things* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *through Chriſt that ſtrengthens me*; and though he could *do nothing againſt the Truth*, yet he could do or ſuffer any thing for it: Love is a ſtrong Paſſion, and ſticks at nothing to pleaſe and enjoy the beloved Object; *Jacob*, after Seven Years Service, grudg'd not to ſerve as many more, to obtain his beloved *Rachel*: And when this Paſſion is fix'd on God, the higheſt and nobleſt of all Objects, 'twill make all Duties pleaſant, and all Difficulties eaſy, in his Service; Yea, *Love is ſtrong as Death*; *many Waters* (ſaith the Wiſe-man) *cannot quench it, nor the Floods drown it*: Nothing is too great for it to undertake; and nothing too hard to undergo; it defies Death, and is not ſtartled at the greateſt Sufferings; 'tis ſo far from ſhrinking from

Ph. 4. 13.

2 Cor. 13. 8.

Cant. 8. 6, 7.

from it in a good Cauſe, that it flies to it, and triumphs over the Malice of the moſt cruel Perſecutors. The Apoſtles thanked God, that they were *counted worthy to ſuffer for him*; The primitive Chriſtians gloried in the *Croſs*, and *counted it all Joy, when they fell into divers Temptations.* Thus *Charity*, as taken for the Love of God, *endureth all things*; not only with Patience, but with Alacrity and Thankfulneſs. Acts 5. 41. Jam. 1. 4.

Secondly, Charity, as taken for the Love of our Neighbour, *endureth all things* for his Amendment and Salvation; it will not tire and grow weary of Well-doing, but will perſevere and think nothing too much he can do for the good of others: No Ingratitude or unworthy Returns, will make Charitable Men Repent of any Good they have done, but will continue to *heap Coals of Fire upon their Head*, and ſeek to *overcome Evil with Good*: Love will pardon and paſs by many Indignities, rather than any ſhould fall into a greater Miſchief; and will endure any temporal Evil, to prevent another's enduring eternal Miſery; it will ſpare no Pains to reclaim a Sinner from the Error of his Ways, nor give over the Uſe of any good Means to that Purpoſe; *God* Rom. 12. 20, 21.

1 Sam. 12. 23 *forbid* (ſaith *Samuel* to the rebellious Iſraelites) *that I ſhould ceaſe to pray for you.* We are bid not to *hate our Brother*, by forbearing *to Reprove him*, as Occaſion ſhall require: In a Word, we muſt neglect no Means, and omit no Opportunity of doing Good to others, tho' it be with ſome Trouble and Loſs to our ſelves: But muſt be willing to deny our ſelves in ſomewhat of our Eaſe, Pleaſure, and Profit, for the greater Good of others, for Charity *endureth all things*.

Thirdly, That Branch of *Charity* which relates to our ſelves, teaches us to endure any thing here, for the eternal Happineſs and Salvation of our Souls hereafter; knowing that 2 Cor. 4. 17. *theſe light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment, work out for us a far more exceeding, and eternal Weight of Glory.* This Grace helps us to *look* (as the Apoſtle directs us) *not ſo much to the things that are ſeen, which are Temporal, as to the things that are not ſeen, which are Eternal*: And as much as a Moment comes ſhort of Eternity, ſo far are the ſhort tranſitory Evils of this Life exceeded by the laſting and never-fading Glories of the Next: for which Reaſon, the Apoſtle *reckon'd the preſent Sufferings of this preſent Life not worthy to be nam'd, or*

compar'd

compar'd with the Glories that ſhall be reveal'd in us. Rom. 8. 18.

The Worldling, indeed, and the Senſualiſt, who look no farther than this World, are ſo wholly taken up with the Softneſs and Vanities of it, that they will endure no Hardſhip, and thereby raſhly expoſe themſelves to all the Miſeries of another Life, to avoid a few Difficulties in this.

But *Charity*, which implies a true Love of our ſelves, enables us to look farther, and will chuſe rather *to ſuffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleaſures of Sin, which are but for a Seaſon; Eſteeming the Reproach of Chriſt greater Riches than all the Treaſures of Egypt.* Heb. 11. 25, 26.

So that *Charity* is conſtant, and can endure the ſharpeſt Trials; 'tis not like the ſlight Friendſhip of the World, fickle and uncertain, that varies with the Wind, and is ſhaken by every Blaſt; but like the Poles of the World, that remain ſtedfaſt and immovable, and ſtand the Shock of the fierceſt Temptation: The Bond of *Charity* is ſo ſacred and inviolable, that it muſt not, yea, cannot be broken; and the Cords of Love are ſo ſoft and eaſy to all ingenuous Natures, that

they would not, if they might, caſt them from them. 'Twill keep them conſtant,

Firſt, In their Duty to God, from which no Smiles or Frowns of the World, can draw or diſcourage them; and which no Change of Fortune or Affairs can alter; Proſperity cannot corrupt, nor Adverſity turn thoſe from their Duty, that are influenc'd by this Virtue; which will ever make them Thankful for the former, and Patient under the latter: *Charity endureth all things*; and is ſo far from encouraging Men to fly off from their Duty, upon the Score of Afflictions, that they ſerve only to quicken, and make them ſtick the cloſer to it: *Tho' he ſlay me* (ſaith *Job*) *yet will I put my truſt in him.*

Secondly, It makes them conſtant in their Duty to their Neighbour; and nothing, how difficult ſoever, can make them leave or forſake him. *A Friend* (ſaith *Solomon*) *is born for Adverſity.* He that is animated with this Grace, will be able not only to endure, but to ſtick cloſer under the adverſe Aſſaults of Fortune, and is ſo fitly fram'd, and provided by this Virtue for ſuch a Seaſon, that he will improve Adverſity to the greater Advantage: The Paraſite, indeed, or Flatterer ſeems to be born only for Proſperity;

ty; and there are enough to be found, who are willing to partake of our Plenty, and ſhare in our Joys; But the Number of thoſe is few, that will bear a part in our Sorrows, and ſtand firm in the evil Day. *The Rich* (ſaith *Solomon*) *hath many Friends, but the Poor is forſaken of his Neighbour:* Many in the Sunſhine of Proſperity will flutter about us, who fly off in time of Adverſity; and, like *Job*'s Comforters, leave us deſtitute of all Comfort, when we ſtand in greateſt Need of it; Their Friendſhip, like ſome ſorts of Inſects, is born and cheriſh'd by the Heat of Summer, but dies away in the Winter, and cannot bear the Rigour of a cold Seaſon. Prov. 14. 20.

Now *Charity* gives a greater Strength and Firmneſs to Friendſhip; Enables it to endure all things, and to ſtick cloſe amidſt all the Storms and Tempeſts of Adverſity; it gives Courage to attempt, and Fortitude enough to bear any Hardſhip; yea, it grows ſtronger by Adverſity, and encreaſes its Love, as Fire does its Heat, by the Sharpneſs of the Seaſon.

An Inſtance of this, we have in *Jonathan*, whoſe Love to *David* made him plead his Cauſe, and ſtand firm to him in all his Troubles: Neither the Diſpleaſure

of a Father, nor the Loſs of a Kingdom, or of Life it ſelf, could make him let go his Friend, whom he ſecur'd in all Extremities with the Hazard of Himſelf.

Laſtly, This Grace will keep us conſtant to the Love and Duty we owe to our ſelves; that is, 'twill make us endure any thing now, rather than undo our ſelves to Eternity; it will not ſuffer us to ſhrink from our Duty for fear of Affliction, or, to hazard our Souls out of a too great Fondneſs and Tenderneſs for our Bodies: 'twill fortifie us againſt Affliction, by the Love of our Selves, who oft'times receive greater Benefit, than Loſs by them; and will not for Fear of a leſſer Evil forego a greater Good. There is, indeed, a falſe Self-Love, that turns Men out of the Paths of Virtue, when any ſeeming Difficulty lies in the Way, and leads them into any Vice and Wickedneſs, to promote their ſinful Delights or Deſigns; Theſe miſtake their true Intereſt and Happineſs; fondly preferring vain tranſitory Pleaſures, above more laſting and ſubſtantial Joys; and purſuing the Trifles of Time, before the weightier Matters of Eternity. Whereas the true Love of our Selves, will fix in us the Love of Virtue, and that will make

us

us *ſtedfaſt, unmovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, for as much as our Labour will not be in vain in the Lord.* 1 Cor. 15. 58.

And now, we are arriv'd to the higheſt Pitch and Perfection of Chriſtian *Charity*, which teaches us to endure all things, for the ſake of Chriſt, and to adhere to our Duty with an unſhaken Firmneſs and Conſtancy of Mind.

All that remains, is to excite us to the Practice of this eminent Grace, which is the Ornament and Perfection of all Religion; the Comfort of this Life, and the Felicity of the Next.

Wherefore above all things *Let us have fervent* Charity *among our Selves*, that no Temptations may allure, nor any Afflictions affright us from our Duty, but may perſevere to the End in the Love of God, our Neighbour, and our Selves.

The

The DURATION OF CHARITY. *It never Faileth.*

1 Cor. XIII. 8.

Charity *never faileth: but whether there be Prophecies, they ſhall fail; whether there be Tongues they ſhall ceaſe; whether there be Knowledge it ſhall vaniſh away.*

THE Apoſtle having, in the Four foregoing Verſes, deſcrib'd the Nature of *Charity*, by the ſeveral Acts and Properties of it; he here reſumes his former Subject, and goes on to ſet forth the Excellency of this Grace, with which he began the Chapter: In the

the Three first Verses, He preferrs it above all the Gifts of the Spirit, in respect of the Usefulness of it: Letting us know, that the Gifts of Tongues, of Prophecy, of Knowledge, of Faith, are all nothing without this Grace; And that the most liberal Bounty, in Feeding the Poor, and even Martyrdom it self, in giving the Body to be Burnt, even to be Burnt Alive, without *Charity*, *profiteth Nothing*.

In these following words, he farther declares its Excellency, from the perpetual Duration and Continuance of it: For *Charity never faileth; whether there be Prophecies, they shall fail*, &c. In which words we may observe,

First, The indefectible Duration of this Virtue, in these words, *Charity never faileth.*

Secondly, The short and vanishing Nature of all things, that may be set in Competition with it, in those words, *Whether there be Prophecies they shall fail; whether there be Tongues they shall cease; whether there be Knowledge it shall vanish away.* Where 'tis to be noted, that the Apostle takes no notice of the Wealth, Honour, Power, or Pleasures of the World; these being all too light to be put into the Balance

Balance againſt it; or if they ſhould, would be quickly *found wanting*. All that he thinks fit to be mention'd, or laid againſt it, is the Wiſdom of the World; the Gifts and Endowments of the Mind; ſuch, as the Eloquence and Diverſity of Tongues, Prophecy, Knowledge, and the like; all which he tells us, are vaſtly outweigh'd by the Grace of *Charity*; As will appear by conſidering,

Firſt, The perpetual and indefectible Duration of it, held forth to us in theſe words, *Charity never faileth.*

The Worth and Excellency of Things, are generally meaſur'd by the Duration of them; thoſe things that are of a permanent and laſting Nature, we commonly ſet a good Price upon; and ſuch as ſooner molder away and decay, we eſteem leſs conſiderable; and according to the length or ſhortneſs of their Continuance, we either depretiate, or enhance their Value. Now by this Standard, this Grace of *Charity* will be found far to exceed all other Excellencies whatever; for it never fails to aſſiſt, encourage and comfort us in this World, and in the World to come, never fails to crown us with an endleſs and glorious Reward;

Reward; both which muſt be briefly conſider'd, to convince us of the tranſcendent and never-failing Excellency of this Virtue.

Firſt, I ſay, *Charity* never fails to aſſiſt, to ſtand by and comfort us in this World; for when other things fail, this will adminiſter to us Joy and Conſolation: yea, when the contrary Courſe breeds nothing but Trouble and Diſquiet, this always affords Eaſe and Satisfaction; as will be evident, by conſidering the ſeveral Branches of this Virtue.

The firſt Part of it, which conſiſts in *Suffering long* the little Evils and Treſpaſſes of Mankind, is accompanied with greater Peace and Pleaſure than the Revenging of them.

The Next, which is to be *Kind*, and doing good Offices to all Men, never fails to attract the Love, both of God and Man.

The Third, will ſecure us from the fretful Evils of Envy, and inſtead of that, will give us a ſhare in the Joys and Comfort of every One's Proſperity. It ſuppreſſes likewiſe, all that Pride and Vanity of Mind, which render Men Troubleſome to one another; and entitles to all, the Grace and Bleſſings of Humility.

Moreover,

Moreover, by checking all unſeemly, ſelfiſh, and paſſionate Behaviour, it puts a Decency into our Words and Actions, that is not only Graceful, but Uſeful, to all about us; and by believing, hoping, and thinking the beſt of all Men, it hath evermore the beſt Returns of Kindneſs and Candor from them.

In a word, The Practice of this Grace never fails to make us Eaſy, both to our Selves and Others.

But tho' the ſeveral Branches of this Grace be of daily Uſe, and afford the moſt durable Satisfaction in this World; yet the never-failing Excellency of *Charity*, is beſt ſeen in the World to come; for it will go along with us to Heaven, where it makes up the chiefeſt Part of our Felicity; and will continue to do ſo to all Eternity: which things, will make it plainly appear, that *Charity never faileth.*

Firſt, *Charity* ceaſeth not with this World, but goes beyond it, and accompanies us to Heaven: This is an Excellency far above all earthly Comforts, which leave us much ſooner; and, like wither'd Leaves, drop from us. The Wealth, Honours, and Pleaſures of this World, are all fleeting and momentary:

they

they ſeldom go with us to the Grave; but if they do that, there we are ſure to part with them, and muſt bid Adieu to them for ever: but *Charity* goes farther with us, and leads us into the Preſence of God, where *there is Fulneſs of Joy, and Rivers of Pleaſure for evermore: Vivit poſt funera Virtus*; Virtue ſprouts forth on the other ſide the Grave, and will there crown us with endleſs Glory. At the Day of Judgment, our Bleſſed Saviour will publickly recount, and reward our *Charity*; the Good we here do to Others, will then be return'd a Hundred-fold into our Boſom; and what we have lent to the Lord, by Relieving the Poor, will be repay'd with Uſury; this way we remit a Treaſure into the other World, and when all other Things fail, provide an eternal Subſiſtence for our immortal Souls.

Secondly, As *Charity* goes with us into the other World, ſo will it make up the chiefeſt Part of our Felicity; for Heaven is to be conſider'd, not ſo much as a Place, as a State conſiſting in the Renovation and Perfection of our Natures: the Happineſs of God, is in the infinite Perfections of his Divine Nature, and the more we participate of thoſe Perfections, the greater

greater Degrees of Happineſs we attain to; ſince we thereby approach the nearer unto God, the Center of all Felicity: Now, there is nothing that gives us a nearer Approach to, and Reſemblance of God, than this Grace of *Charity*; *for God is Love* (ſaith the Apoſtle) and he that walketh in Love, walketh in God. By this we become, not only like, but one with him; being *transform'd into the ſame Image from Glory to Glory*; that is, from Grace to Glory, which differ from each other not in Kind, but Degree; for Grace is the Seed or Beginning of Glory; and Glory, is the Maturity and Perfection of Grace. When we begin to Love God, and our Neighbour for his Sake, then do we begin our Heaven here on Earth: when we grow in this Grace, and proceed from one degree to another, then do we approach nearer unto God, and gradually advance to the Heavenly State, where it will arrive to the higheſt Pitch of Perfection; that is, 'twill be ſtrain'd from all corrupt Mixtures and Alloys; and refin'd into a pure celeſtial Flame; ſo that *Charity* is ſo far from failing, that 'tis ſtill encreaſing; and *like a ſhining Light, ſhines more and more unto the perfect Day.*

Laſtly,

Laſtly, When 'tis arriv'd there, 'twill never ſet more, but ſhine out bright and glorious to all Eternity; which ſhews us the never-failing Excellency of this Virtue: Heaven is the Seat of everlaſting Love, the Manſion of never-failing *Charity*; There the Love of God will ſtill reign in the Heart; and the Love of our Brethren for ever dwell in the Breaſt of juſt Men made perfect. Here, the Love of Both is mightily interrupted, by the Concerns of this Life; 'tis weaken'd by the Love of the World; and much impair'd by the Luſts of the Fleſh; but there, 'twill be advanc'd above any Defect and Imperfection; and 'twill be the inſeparable Glory of the Saints, to Love for ever, without decay.

Indeed, ſome Acts of *Charity* will ceaſe in Heaven; but they are ſuch only, as there will be no need of in that bleſſed State; there will be no need (as one hath well obſerv'd) of Giving Alms; becauſe in Heaven, there will be none that want them. There will be no need of mutual Forgivneſs; becauſe, no Injuries or Affronts are there done to any; nor will there be any need of bearing with one another's Infirmities, becauſe in Heaven, there is neither Sin, nor Error.

But though ſome particular Acts of *Charity*, relating to the Failings, Neceſſities and Infirmities of Mankind will ceaſe there, with the Occaſion of them; yet *Charity*, in the main Branches of it, relating to the Love of God and the Saints, in which alone conſiſt the Happineſs and Perfection of our Nature, *will never fail*, but improve to the higheſt Pitch, and in that Perfection 'twill abide and continue for ever.

Thus having ſhew'd the indefectible Nature of this Grace, which will never be out-dated, but laſt for ever in Heaven, I muſt, to ſhew the Excellency of it, proceed to conſider farther,

Secondly, The defectible and tranſitory Nature of all Things elſe, expreſs'd in theſe words, *Whether there be Propheſies, they ſhall fail; whether there be Tongues, they ſhall ceaſe; whether there be Knowledge, it ſhall vaniſh away.*

I obſerv'd before, that the Apoſtle here takes no notice of the Riches, Honours, Power, or Pleaſures of the World; theſe being all too vain, and periſhing Things, to be nam'd or compar'd with this excellent Grace: The moſt ſpecious and durable Accompliſhments on this ſide Religion, are the Gifts of the Spirit,

together

together with the natural Endowments and acquir'd Ornaments of the Mind; and yet theſe too, come vaſtly ſhort of the Dignity and Duration of *Charity*: For,

Firſt, *Whether there be Prophecies, they ſhall fail.*

Prophecy, whether taken for the foretelling Things to come, or for the expounding the Holy Scriptures, hath been ever reckon'd a Gift of great Uſe and Benefit to the Church: and they who have had the Spirit of Prophecy, have been ſtill held in great Eſteem and Veneration; but yet this is but a ſhort, vaniſhing Gift, that ſometimes fails and becomes of little or no Uſe; it often expires and ceaſes here in this Life, but never goes with us into the Next. All Predictions of Things future, ceaſe of Courſe, with the Accompliſhment of them; as Shadows are wont to do with the Subſtance; and the unfolding of Myſteries is no farther Uſeful, when they are throughly underſtood. This Gift may take Place awhile, and be of ſome Benefit here in this World, but it fails with it, and never goes beyond the Grave. We are told, indeed, that ſome, at the Laſt-Day, will plead and inſiſt upon this Gift, ſaying, *Lord, Lord, have we not Propheſied in thy Name?* But

where *Charity* is wanting, 'twill gain neither Reputation, nor Reward; and if they have no other Good Works to ſpeak for them, will be excluded for Workers of Iniquity: Prophecies then will fail, and be of no Uſe or Comfort to them. Again,

Secondly, *Whether there be Tongues, they ſhall ceaſe.*

The Gift of Tongues was neceſſary in the Beginning of Chriſtianity, for the Propagating the Goſpel to Men of divers Nations and Languages; without which, neither could the Apoſtles have taught, nor the People, to whom they came, have learn'd any thing from them: And the Eloquence and Ornaments of Speech are ſtill uſeful here, to promote the Belief, and perſwade to the Practice of it. This Gift was given by the Spirit of God, as a Remedy againſt the confuſion of Tongues at *Babel*; when Mankind, for their Pride and Preſumption, were Puniſh'd with Dividing their Language, and made to deſiſt from their haughty Enterprize, by being unable to underſtand one another; but they who vainly thought, by their own Wiſdom and Strength, to invade Heaven, had been for ever unable to learn, or find the way thither, if God had

had not endow'd ſome with this Gift of Tongues to direct them. 'Tis by this means that Men of all Countries and Languages, are brought to underſtand the wonderful Works of God; and we too are taught the ſame way the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

But how uſeful ſoever this Diverſity of Tongues may be in this Life, they will e'er long ceaſe and be no more, in Heaven. All theſe Tongues will be ſilenc'd; and there will be no Difference, or Confuſion of Languages there, where is nothing but perfect Harmony and Concord: The Bleſt Inhabitants of thoſe Regions are all of one Heart, and if there be any Speech, will be of one Tongue too; there are no different Dialects, nor is there any uſe of a Diverſity of Tongues, where all underſtand the Language of that Heavenly *Canaan*. Tongues then will ſhortly ceaſe; and in Heaven, where *Charity* reigns, as there will be no farther uſe, ſo we ſhall hear, no more of them. Moreover,

Thirdly, *Whether there be Knowledge, it ſhall vaniſh away.*

By Knowledge here, we are not to underſtand the Knowledge of God and divine Things; for this is ſo far from

vaniſhing away, that 'tis a great Part of the Happineſs of Heaven, where it will improve and abide for ever; *This is Life eternal* (ſaith St. *John*) *to know God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent*: yea, this is included in that *Charity* that never faileth, and muſt always continue with it: For we cannot Love God, without the Knowledge of him; and as we advance in the Love of him, ſo muſt we in the Knowledge of him too: So that this divine and excellent Knowledge, which the Apoſtle deſir'd above all things, is ſo far from paſſing away, that 'tis ſtill paſſing from one Degree to another, till it arrive to its utmoſt Height and Perfection in Heaven.

But the Knowledge here intended by the Apoſtle, is all Earthly Knowledge; *viz.* The Knowledge of Arts and Sciences, worldly Wiſdom, and Human Learning, and the like; which being ſuited only to this preſent State, will vaniſh and be done away in the Next: The Myſteries of Art and Nature, come far ſhort of the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven; and therefore the Knowledge of the One will give Place, and be ſwallow'd up in the Other. Here, indeed, the Knowledge of Earthly Things

is not only useful, but necessary to the right Understanding and Managing the Affairs of this Life; and the Contemplation of them, afford no small Pleasure and Delight to the Rational Soul: But in Heaven, we shall be advanc'd far above these things; and as we shall have no Need, so we shall have no Relish of them. There we shall have sublimer Truths to employ our Contemplation, and purer Joys to tast and ruminate upon; for there we shall be still beholding the Face of God, and in that Mirror of Perfection, shall see, and know all that we are capable of: In a word, We shall there be advanc'd to the highest Form in the Knowledge of God, and then all the lower Rudiments of this World will pass away.

Thus we see the Excellency of this Grace of *Charity*, which *never faileth*, above all spiritual Gifts, which will shortly cease and have an End. From whence we may learn,

First, To put a due Price and Value upon this noble and divine Grace; this is that Pearl of great Price, which is worth the Parting with all we have, to Purchase; for this will stand us in stead, when all other Things will fail us; 'twill

be, not only a preſent Stay and Comfort to us here, but a future Support to our Souls, and their Portion for ever; and therefore, though we may *Covet* now, and Labour for ſome of the moſt uſeful and neceſſary Gifts of this Life, yet we ſhould chiefly *mind the more excellent Way*, and walk in it, that we may find Reſt, and Peace, and Happineſs to our Souls.

Secondly, We may learn hence, not to boaſt or pride our Selves in any of theſe ſpiritual Gifts, which are at beſt but ſhort-liv'd and vaniſhing; the very Name of Gifts, is ſufficient to check all Pride and Vain-glorying in them: For that ſhews them to be none of our own; that they are only given or lent to us: And 'tis abſurd to look big, and ſtrut in the Ornaments of another. But the Shortneſs of their Duration, is enough for ever to daſh all vain Conceit and Confidence in them; for they will all ſhortly fail us, and come to an End; and 'tis no better than the Folly of Children, to pleaſe our ſelves with Bubbles and Butter-flies, which appear Gay for a while, and ſoon vaniſh away. Let Knowledge then not *puff us up*, but let it be ſanctified with *Charity*, that it may *edify and build us up in our Holy Faith*.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, Since our Gifts will ſhortly ceaſe and paſs away, Let us endeavour to put them to the beſt Uſe whilſt we have them; that is, let us uſe them to the Glory of God, the Good of his Church, and the mutual Comfort and Benefit of one another: This way they will turn to a good Account, and ſpeak for us when they are gone; otherwiſe they will but inflame our Reckoning, and the Weight of our abuſed Talents will ſink us into the deeper Condemnation.

The PERFECTION OF CHARITY.

1 Cor. XIII. 9, 10, 11, 12.

For we know in part, and we propheſie in part; But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away; when I was a Child, I ſpake as a Child, I underſtood as a Child, I thought as a Child, but when I became a Man, I put away Childiſh things; For now we ſee through a Glaſs darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then ſhall I know even as alſo I am known.

THESE words (as appears by the illative Particle, *for*, in the Front of them) are brought in by our Apoſtle, as a Reaſon to confirm the Truth of what went before: In the preceding Verſe, he had aſſerted the eternal Duration of *Charity*, which *never faileth*; And likewiſe

likewiſe the ſhort and tranſitory Continuance of all ſpiritual Gifts, which in a little time will ceaſe and vaniſh away; *Whether there be Propheſies they ſhall fail; whether there be Tongues they ſhall ceaſe, &c.* Now, for a Proof of both theſe, he adds theſe words, *For we Know in part, and Propheſie in part; and here we ſee through a Glaſs darkly, &c.* Where the Apoſtle uſes a double Argument to prove what he before Aſſerted. The

Firſt, Is taken from the Imperfection of all our ſpiritual Gifts, which being inconſiſtent with the perfect State of Heaven, will be all done away, when we come thither: *For* here (ſaith he) *we Know but in part, we Propheſie in part*, by Reaſon whereof, we now *ſpeak, think, and act as Children*, being chiefly taken up with *Childiſh things*; And if we ſee any thing of nobler and ſpiritual Objects, 'tis only *through a Glaſs darkly*, all the Knowledge we have of them being weak and imperfect, from whence he inferrs the ceaſing of them in the future State, *when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away.* Meaning, that our imperfect Gifts of Knowledge, Propheſie, Tongues, and the like, will be at an end, and give way to a more perfect State. The

Second

Second Argument is taken from the Perfection of the Graces of the Spirit, and particularly of *Charity*, which being ſuited to the Nature and Perfection of the Heavenly-State will *never fail*, but Abide for ever; for by this we *become Men, and put away Childiſh things.* Yea, by this we *become like unto God, partaking of his divine Nature and Perfections*, by which means we are enabled to *ſee him Face to Face*; to behold him as he is, *and to know God, even as we are known by him*: meaning, that the Graces of the Spirit qualify us for the State and Condition of Heaven, being ſuited to the Perfection and Happineſs of that Place, to which they in a great meaſure contribute, and therefore have a permanent and never-ceaſing Continuance in the Manſions of Bliſs and Glory. Theſe Two things will give us the Senſe and Driſt of the Apoſtle in theſe Words, and therefore muſt be particularly handled. I begin,

Firſt, With the Imperfection of all our ſpiritual Gifts, which will be therefore done away, when we come to a more perfect State, *we Know in part, and Propheſie in part, &c.* Now the Imperfection of theſe Gifts is deſcrib'd here by Two things,

Firſt,

First, By the Infancy and Minority of our present State.

Secondly, By the Weakness and Obscurity of the Knowledge we attain to in it.

First, I say, the Apostle describes the Imperfection of all spiritual Gifts by the Infancy and Minority of our present State, which he expresses here in his own Person, *when I was a Child, I spake as a Child, understood as a Child, and thought as a Child, &c.* St. *Paul*, who was an eminent and well-grown Christian, and arriv'd as far as any, *to the fulness of the Stature of a Man in Christ Jesus*, does yet here acknowledge himself in a State of Minority and Child-hood; and that *he spake, understood, and thought as such a One.* And if this great Apostle of the Gentiles, who was rap't up into the Third Heavens, under all the Advantages of Vision and Revelation, own'd himself so much *a Child in Understanding*, what little Reason have we to pretend to be more *Men* in it, under much greater Imperfections?

I know some would interpret these Words of the Apostle of the Infant State of the Church, under the Old Testament, when it was under the Discipline and Pedagogy of the Law, and train'd up by weak and beggarly Elements, to the more Manly

Manly State of the Gospel, according to that of the same Apostle *Gal.* 4. 1, 2. *Now I say that the Heir, as long as he is a Child, differeth nothing from a Servant, tho' he be Lord of all, but is under Tutors and Guardians till the time appointed of the Father, even so we, when we were Children, were in bondage under the elements of the World; but when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son to Redeem them that were under the Law.* But tho' the Apostle in these Words to the *Galatians*, makes a Comparison between the Law and the Gospel, styling the one, a State of Minority; and the other, of Man-hood; yet, in the Words of our Text, he plainly compares the present, with a future State; for the Terms of *seeing God face to face, and knowing God as we are known*, import things not attainable in this Life, but reserv'd for the Honour and Happiness of the next.

In this Life, the best of us speak, think and act too much like Children; being fond of Toys and Trifles, and taken overmuch with the Wealth, Honours, Pleasures, the Rattles and Geugaws of this present World; which shews the Minority and Imperfection of this present State, in which we too much affect and pursue mean and childish Things. *Se-*

Secondly, The Imperfection of our Gifts, is here farther ſet forth, by the Darkneſs and Obſcurity of our Knowledge: *now* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *we ſee through a Glaſs darkly; we know but in part, and propheſie in part*: St. *Paul*, who had as piercing an Eye, and as clear an Inſight into divine Myſteries as any other, does here confeſs the Weakneſs and Imperfection of his Sight in theſe Matters, which he could only ſee *through a Glaſs darkly*; his Eye could not bear a direct and immediate Viſion of divine Objects, he could only ſee ſome Glympſes of them by Reflection; ſome Images and faint Repreſentations of them in a Glaſs, and that darkly too: for, *Radius Reflexus languet*, the Glaſs returns not the Object it ſelf, but only the Shadow and Reſemblance of it; and therefore gives only a weak and languiſhing Repreſentation, ſo dark and imperfect is our Sight here; for if this Eagle-ey'd Apoſtle ſaw ſo darkly, how weak muſt our Sight be, who come ſo ſhort of him?

Now there are two Glaſſes preſented to our View, *viz.* the Glaſs of the Creatures, and the Glaſs of the Scriptures, in both which we here ſee but darkly. For the

Firſt,

First, The World is but one great Looking-Glaſs, and all the Creatures in it are ſo many Images and Repreſentations of a Deity; if we look Upward, *the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his Handy-Work*; if we look Downward, we may behold him in all the Herbs and Beaſts of the Field: if we look Inward, we may ſee in our Souls the Image of our Maker, and our Bodies too will appear to be the Workmanſhip of his Hand. *The inviſible things of God* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *from the Creation of the World are clearly ſeen, even his eternal Power and God-head.* The very Heathens could ſee God in this Glaſs; the Image and Repreſentation of Him, being ſcatter'd every where, and viſible in all his Creatures. But, as they, ſo we too, ſee in this Glaſs but darkly: for tho' ſome of the Attributes of God may ſhine forth, and be diſcern'd in his Creatures, as his infinite Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs, yet, there are others, of which there is no Shadow or Footſtep; as his tranſcendent Love in Jeſus Chriſt; the Riches of his Grace; the Myſtery of Man's Redemption, and the like; of theſe there is not the leaſt Notice or Impreſſion in any of the Creatures; ſo that this

this is at best, but a dark and imperfect Vision.

Secondly, The other Glass, in which these Things are represented, is the Book of Scriptures, in which tho' we see divine Truths more clearly than in the former; yet, even in this Glass too, we now see but darkly, in respect of that brighter and fuller Representation, that will be made to us hereafter; here we see God only in his *Back-parts, but his Face cannot be seen*, which is but a faint Vision of Him, if compar'd with our future seeing him *Face to Face*: The Discoveries of *Moses* and the Prophets, concerning a Saviour, are all but dark and enigmatical, vail'd with Types and shadowy Representations; our Fathers in this Sense too were *under a Cloud*; and sure there could be but little Light, where there were so many Shadows; and tho' *David* styles this word *a Light unto his Feet, and a Lanthorn to his Path*; yet, comparatively, it was but a dim Light, and a dark Lanthorn; yea, even under the Gospel, when these Shadows were scatter'd, and Life and Immortality were brought into a clearer Light, which shin'd brighter and brighter till perfect Day; yet, still the Apostle acknowledges,

we *now ſee but darkly*, and *know only in part*. Alas, how weak and imperfect is our Knowledge of God here? What poor Manifeſtations have we now of the divine Nature and Preſence, in compariſon of that clearer Sight we ſhall have of them hereafter; when his Eſſence will be more openly diſplay'd to us, and we ſhall be for ever Happy in his Preſence?

Now from this Dimneſs and Imperfection of our Knowledge, our Apoſtle here argues the tranſitory Nature of all ſpiritual Gifts; which will be ſwallow'd up, and diſappear in our more perfect State: *Propheſie, which is now but in part*, will then fail; *Knowledge*, which is but in part, will *vaniſh away*; for *when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away*: St. *James* makes ſeeing through a Glaſs, not only a dark, but a vaniſhing and tranſient Viſion; for when *a Man hath ſeen his Face in it, and goes away, he preſently forgets what manner of Man he was*. Now ſuch a dying and forgetful View of God, and our Selves, is inconſiſtent with the Happineſs of our future State, and therefore muſt ceaſe there, and be done away. Thus having explain'd the Apoſtle's Argument, to prove the failing and tranſitory Nature of all Spiritual Gifts, I proceed, *Se-*

Secondly, To his other Argument, whereby he proves the permanent and never-failing Duration of *Charity*, taken from the Perfection and Suitableneſs of it to the Heavenly State: for whereas the former are ſuited only to our preſent imperfect State of Child-hood and Minority, in which we are train'd up by the Rudiments of this World, and do at beſt but ſpeak, think and underſtand as Children; the latter is accommodated to the more Manly and Glorious Condition of Heaven, where it makes up a great part of our Happineſs, and ſets us above the Need or Love of ſuch Childiſh things: we know, even in this Life, the Change of Age makes a great Change in our Affections and Inclinations; inſomuch, that we neither think, ſpeak, or act, when we come to be Men, as we did in our Childhood; but the difference will be vaſtly greater, between this and another Life; where tho' Gifts are ſuited to the Deſires and Neceſſities of the former, yet 'tis Grace only that fits and qualifies us for the latter; and conſequently this will remain for ever, when the other vaniſh away: Moreover, for the better clearing of this Argument, we muſt note, that the Two great Ingredients of our

future Felicity, are the Knowledge, and the Love of God; both which being imperfect and defective here, by reason of the Weakneſs of our Gifts, will be hereafter improv'd and perfected by the Power of divine Grace; and when that which is imperfect ſhall be done away, then that which is perfect will come and continue for ever. *Now we know but in part*, and *ſee only through a Glaſs darkly*; Our Knowledge here depending very much on our Senſes, which are chiefly employ'd about ſenſual and preſent Things, muſt be very dim and defective in future and ſpiritual Matters; *the Natural Man* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *diſcerns not the things of God, neither indeed can he, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcern'd; and if the the Light within us be Darkneſs, how great is that Darkneſs?* So that we know but little now of what we ſhould know, little of what we might know, and leſs of what we ſhall know hereafter.

But in Heaven *we ſhall know God, even as we are known*, the little Portion of Knowledge we have here, will there be improv'd into a large and laſting Stock; our Eye, which can diſcover here but ſome ſmall Glympſes of the Divine Nature and Perfections, ſhall then be rais'd to ſee more

more ſtrongly, and have a more clear and raviſhing Proſpect of both: *The Glaſs in which we now ſee ſo darkly*, will then be broken, or laid aſide as uſeleſs; for we ſhall have a more direct and immediate View of God, *we ſhall ſee him Face to Face*; or, as the Apoſtle elſewhere expreſſes, *we ſhall ſee him as he is.* And if the Queen of *Sheba* thought thoſe Happy, that ſtill beheld the Face, and heard the Wiſdom of *Solomon*; how infinitely more Happy muſt they be, who enjoy continually the Preſencc and Glory of God? Again,

As we now Know but in part, ſo we Love but in part too; our Underſtandings here, being weak and blind in ſpiritual Matters, often mis-lead the Will and Affections, by reaſon whereof they faſten too frequently on wrong Objects, or too faintly on right Ones; Our Love of God is ſometimes weaken'd by Fears, or interrupted by ſecular Cares and Concerns, but hereafter all theſe Incumbrances will be remov'd, our Faculties will be all regulated and improv'd, and thereby our Love will be refin'd into a pure and celeſtial Flame; which beatifical Acts of *Charity* will never fail, but being not only conſiſtent with, but conſtituting a great Part of our future Glory, will abide for ever in Heaven. Thus

Thus we see the imperfect and vanishing nature of all spiritual Gifts, and likewise the more perfect, permanent and perpetual duration of this excellent Grace of *Charity*.

The Uses we are to make of both these are,

First, To learn from hence, not to be too Fond or Ambitious of these spiritual Gifts, and much less to use them to any evil and vain-glorious Purposes: This was the great Fault of the *Corinthians*, which the Apostle endeavours to remove and rectify in this, and the following Chapters of this Epistle; he observ'd how Ambitious many of them were of these spiritual Gifts, not for any Publick Good they design'd to the Church by them, but to promote some private Ends of their Own: Some were desirous of the Gift of Prophecy, rather to magnify Themselves, than to edify Others; others coveted the Gift of Tongues, not so much to set forth God's Glory, as their Own, and to recommend Themselves by the Eloquence and Ornaments of Speech; others would fain have the Gift of Healing and Miracles, not to do Good, but that they might appear to be Some-body, and be admir'd above others,

for

for their wonderful Works; others again affected Knowledge or Science, falſly ſo call'd, merely to ſhew their Parts, to make Parties, and draw Diſciples after them; and generally they were fond of theſe Gifts, rather for Vanity and Oſtentation, than for the Honour of God, or the Edification of his Church.

Now to Check this Vanity, the Apoſtle here beats down the Price of theſe ſpiritual Gifts, ſeeking to lower their Eſteem of them, and of Themſelves upon the account of them; by letting them know the Shortneſs and Imperfection of them: That Prophecy, which is now but in part, will ſhortly fail; that Tongues, though never ſo much admir'd, will e'er-long be all ſilenc'd; and Knowledge, how plauſible or ſpecious ſoever it may appear, will in a little time paſs away; and therefore to dote upon theſe things, is but to admire a Shadow, and to ſet our Hearts upon what will ſhortly leave us, and lurch our Expectations: If we will needs affect theſe things, let us, as the Apoſtle adviſes, *Covet earneſtly the beſt Gifts*, that is, ſuch as may beſt ſerve the Church here, and our Selves for ever hereafter.

Laſtly, We may learn from hence to

prefer the Graces of the Spirit, before the beſt Gifts of it, and to walk in the *more Excellent Way* of *Charity*, which not only leads to everlaſting Life, but is it ſelf the Glory and Happineſs of it. Grace, we ſee, out-laſts the beſt Gifts, it follows us to Heaven, and Befriends us there, when all things elſe are gone; it hath Eternity ſtampt on it, 'twill lead us into the Preſence of God, and make us for ever Happy in the Viſion and Enjoyment of Him. 'Tis true indeed, Gifts have their proper Uſe and Excellency, they are highly Neceſſary and Beneficial to the Good of the Church; and if they are apply'd to that End, are not only to be earneſtly Covered here, but will be highly Rewarded hereafter; their End and Uſe ſet them far above all the Gifts of Fortune; and add a Luſtre to them that out-ſhines all Earthly Glories; if they will give Place to Religion, they may take it of all Things elſe: However 'tis Grace only that gives them all their Uſe and Excellency, without which they are but greater Advantages of doing Miſchief; and therefore the Apoſtle wills, above all things, to *follow after Charity*, and to deſire ſpiritual Gifts only for the Benefit and Edification of the

the Church; to which end, he would have us get our *Hearts eſtabliſh'd with Grace*, and our Gifts ſanctify'd and directed by *Charity*; for *Knowledge of it ſelf puffeth up*, whereas 'tis *Charity alone that edifies*. And this ſhould make us all Labour and Pray for this excellent Grace, which is alone able to bring our Selves and Others to Glory.



The

IN

What Reſpect CHARITY Is Preferable to Faith *and* Hope.

1 Cor. XIII. The laſt Verſe.

And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, *theſe Three; but the greateſt of theſe is* Charity.

IN theſe Words the Apoſtle ends the Chapter, as he began it with the higheſt Character and Commendation of *Charity*. He had before exalted it far above all the Gifts of the Spirit, which yet tranſcend all other Things: And here, to raiſe it to the higheſt Pitch of Excellence, he exalts it above all the Graces of the Spirit, which are the Top and

and Eminence of all Perfection; particularly mentioning ſome of the chief of them, and giving *Charity* the Pre-eminence; *And now abideth* Faith, Hope, Charity; *but the greateſt of theſe is* Charity.

Now for a Cloſe of all, I muſt briefly conſider the Nature of theſe Divine Virtues; and then ſhew, wherein *Charity* hath the Pre-eminence. And,

Firſt, For the Grace of *Faith*; Great and Noble Things are ſpoken of it in Holy Scripture: The Author to the *Hebrews*, in the 11*th* Chapter, aſcribes all the memorable Acts and Virtues of the Patriarchs and Others, to the Strength of their Faith; and makes this Grace the Riſe and Fore-runner of Glory: In the firſt Verſe, he deſcribes the Nature of it, ſtyling it *the Subſtance of things hoped for, and the Evidence of things not ſeen*; and after, declares all the great Things, done by thoſe Worthies, to proceed from the Power and Efficacy of this Grace. *By Faith*, Abel, Enoch, Abraham *and the reſt, obtain'd a good Report* here, *and*, at laſt, *received the Promiſe*. This is that Grace that makes future Things preſent to us, and cauſeth us to act and be affected towards them accordingly; giving us ſuch a Reliſh of the Joys of Heaven, as ſets us

a

a longing and ſeeking after them; and likewiſe ſuch a Senſe of the Miſeries of the other World, as excites our Care and Diligence to avoid them: Hence we read ſometimes of the Eye of *Faith*, that helps us to *ſee things that are Inviſible*; ſometimes of the Hand of *Faith*, by which we receive Mercy, and *lay hold of eternal Life*; by this we are enabled to reſiſt all the Temptations and Allurements of this Life; for *this is the Victory which overcometh the World, even our Faith*: Hence the Apoſtle elſewhere calls it the *Shield of Faith*, that defends us from all the Wiles of the Devil, and helps to *Quench the fiery Darts of the Wicked*: And yet though *Faith* be ſo eminent and ſuperlative a Grace, and ſerves to all theſe high and noble Purpoſes, yet the Apoſtle here preferrs *Charity* above it; for *Greater than this is* Charity. Again,

Secondly, *Hope* is another excellent and uſeful Grace of God's holy Spirit, that quickens us in our Duty, and helps to carry us on with Courage and Comfort in our way to Heaven; he that is animated with the Hopes of ſeeing and enjoying God at the laſt, will bear up briſkly under all the Difficulties he may meet with in his way to him; he will deſpiſe

and

and abandon whatever would obſtruct ſuch a glorious Viſion, and likewiſe follow all ſuch things as fit and qualify him for ſo great a Bleſſedneſs; for *He that hath this Hope* (ſaith St. *John*) *will purify himſelf, even as he is pure.* St. *Paul* ſtyles this Hope a *Helmet of Salvation*, to guard us againſt all Temptations, and wills us to put it on to ſecure us from Error and Apoſtacy. The Author to the *Hebrews* calls it *an Anchor of the Soul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt*, that keeps it from fluctuating in Doubts, and fixes it in a firm Expectation of Glory and Immortality: ſo that, this likewiſe is an excellent Grace, and ſerves to many noble Purpoſes, through the whole Courſe of our Lives; for which Reaſon the Apoſtle ſtyles it, a *Lively Hope*, becauſe it quickens our Endeavours, and brings us in the End to everlaſting Life.

1 Joh. 3. 3.

1 Thes. 5. 8.

And yet St. *Paul* ſets *Charity* above This too, for *Now abideth* Faith, Hope *and* Charity, *but the greateſt of theſe is* Charity. But wherein conſiſts the Preeminence of *Charity* above theſe other Graces? Why, This will appear, by

Conſidering it abſolutely in it ſelf; And likewiſe, by

Comparing it with thoſe other Graces.

If

If we consider it in it self, we shall find it to be the Summ and Perfection of all Graces, the Top and Eminence of all Vertue; for it unites us unto God, and ties us in the closest Fellowship and Communion with him; and as all Perfections center in God, so does all the Graces meet in the Love of Him. *Love is of God*, (saith the beloved Disciple) *and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God*; and elsewhere, *If we love one another God dwelleth in us, and his Love is perfected in us*: hence the A-
Col. 3. 14 postle styles it the *Bond of Perfectness*; 'Tis the Knot that ties us to God, and to one another, and keeps all the Parts of Religion together; and therefore the
1 Tim. 1, 5 same Apostle calls it, the *End of the Commandments*, in which they all center, and to which they all tend. Our whole Duty to God is compriz'd in the Love of Him, and *if there be any other Commandment, 'tis briefly comprehended in this Saying, Thou shalt Love thy Neighbour as thy Self:* so that *Charity*, consider'd in it self, is the greatest, because it is the most comprehensive of all Graces.

But if we compare it with *Faith* and *Hope*, as our Text here directs us, we shall find *Charity*, in many respects, to excel

excel Both, and chiefly in the Uſefulneſs and Duration of it.

For the *Firſt*, *Charity* is the moſt Uſeful and Neceſſary Grace, both in this Life, and the Next: As for the Gifts of the Spirit, we have ſeen, that the Higheſt and Beſt of them, without *Charity*, are Nothing worth; and as for the Graces of the Spirit, they are all Perfected and Compleated in *Charity*, without which they would prove but little better; other Graces are but Means and Inſtruments of working This in us, which crowns all the reſt. The *Faith* that ſaves us muſt *work by Love*; otherwiſe tho' it were ſtrong enough to remove Mountains, yet if it cannot remove Malice and Hatred out of the Heart, it profiteth nothing: The *Hope* that brings us to ſee God, muſt be attended with a pure Flame of Love, burning in our Breaſts towards him, and *he that hath this Hope muſt purify his Heart, as he is pure*; otherwiſe 'twill prove but a vain Hope, and a groundleſs Preſumption: *Faith* leads to *Charity*, and is mov'd, acted, yea, and kept alive by it; for *Faith without Works is dead*: *Hope*, that maketh not aſhamed, excites to *Charity*, and is quicken'd by it, without which it would

would languish, and die away in Despair: so that these Graces are but Handmaids to *Charity*, which is both the Beginning, the Progress, and the End of all the Commandments. Moreover,

The Usefulness of this Grace above the other Two, may be seen in the Extensiveness of the Benefit, that accrues by it; for this reaches farther, and extends to all Men; *Faith* and *Hope* are Personal Vertues, and keep mostly at Home, every Man Believes for Himself, and Hopeth for himself; nor is any other the better for them, otherwise than by the Example or Influence of the Good Works that proceed from them; whereas *Charity* (as one hath well observ'd) is that active, dispensing Grace, that walks more Abroad, and is still going up and down doing good; 'tis a publick Benefit, and every one some way or other fares the better for it: And being thus a most publick Good, and of the largest Influence, it must be the Greatest of all Graces.

Furthermore, The Usefulness of this Grace reaches, not to this Life only, but likewise to the Next: *Faith* and *Hope* are indeed very eminent and useful Graces, while we are here; for they

help

help us to look beyond this World, and set us a Labouring and Longing for the Happineſs of another; but when that comes, they will be of no farther Uſe, and will be done away: But *Charity* will go with us to Heaven, and be of perpetual Uſe and Benefit to us, when we are there; yea, 'twill be the main Ingredient of the Happineſs of that Place, which conſiſts in Loving God, and all the Bleſt Inhabitants that belong to Him. And this will lead to the

Laſt, and greateſt Excellence of *Charity*, above thoſe other Graces, which is taken from the everlaſting Continuance and Duration of it: *Faith* and *Hope* will both vaniſh with this Life, and be outdated in the Next; for *Faith* being the *Evidence of things not ſeen*, will ceaſe when thoſe things come to appear; and when we ſhall *ſee God Face to Face*, 'twill be no longer *Faith*, but Viſion: ſo likewiſe *Hope*, being an Expectation of ſomething future, ceaſes upon the actual Poſſeſſion of it; and when 'tis enjoy'd, 'tis no longer *Hope*, but Fruition; for *Hope* is of things not ſeen, and what a Man hath, why doth he yet Hope for; *Charity* is an Unchangable Vertue, and is ſo far from ceaſing, that 'twill be ſtill encreaſe-

ing to Eternity. Thus we see the superlative Excellency of this Grace, above all the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, which is sufficient to recommend it to the Love and Practice of all Christians. All that remains is, to shut up the whole Discourse with an earnest Exhortation to this Excellent Grace: St. *Paul* Prays, in the Behalf of the *Philippians*, that they might have Judgment to know, and Wisdom to choose, *the Things that were most Excellent*, and to that end, *that*
1 Phil. 9, 10. *their Love might abound more and more*; this being the best way to improve their Judgment, to sanctify their Knowledge, and render themselves Approv'd in the Sight of God and Men: This is the *more Excellent Way*, which he shew'd to the *Corinthians*, and would have them all walk in, which would carry them further than the Best Gifts, and enoble them above all other Graces whatever; for *Charity* is the most Glorious and God-like Vertue, 'tis a Transcript or Copy of the divine Perfections; yea, to borrow the Apostle's Expression; 'Tis *the Brightness of the Father's Glory*, and *the express Image of the Son*: Hence the Apostle exhorts the *Colossians*, *Above all things to put on Charity, which is the bond of Perfectness*; he

he had just before advis'd them *to put on* (as the Elect of God) *Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as* Christ *forgave you, so do ye*; by which he wills them to practice the highest Degrees of Christian Kindness, Humility, Meekness and Patience; and then adds, but *above all things put on Charity*; that is, get the Love of others planted in your Hearts, and that will serve as a Bond to fasten and hold all these Graces together, and to lead on to higher Perfection. To the same Purpose St. *Peter* exhorts Christians, *Above all things to have fervent* Charity *among themselves*; as the best means to unite them to God, and to one Another: For *Charity* (that will save one) *shall cover a Multitude of Sins*, that is, 'twill not only hide many Failings and Infirmities of other Men, but likewise procure a Pardon or Covering for many Infirmities of our own; insomuch, that where this charitable Disposition appears in Good Works, though there may be many other Failings and Miscarriages, they shall be all over-look'd and cover'd by the Mantle of *Charity*. 1 Pet. 4. 8.

But farther, to excite us to the Love

and Practice of this excellent Virtue; know

First, That this Grace of *Charity* is the beſt Diſpoſition to fit and prepare us for Glory; for the Happineſs of Heaven conſiſts in the continual and uninterrupted Exerciſe of it, 'tis this makes us like unto God, and eternally to Delight in Him; for *God is Love*, that is, he is the moſt perfect Pattern and Platform of *Charity*, and the nearer we come to it, the Happier we are; the Beginning of it here, in the Love of God and the Brethren, is the Comfort and Happineſs of our preſent State, and the farther we advance in this Grace, the nearer we approach to Glory.

Envy, Hatred, and Malice, are the black Paſſions of Hell, that diſpoſe Men for the wretched Society of Devils and damned Spirits; to which, by the Likeneſs and Deformity of Nature, they will be for ever Conſign'd. 'Tis Goodneſs and *Charity* alone that prepare us for the Bleſſed Society of Heaven, which is the Seat of Love, and the Manſion of never-failing *Charity*; And 'tis the Exerciſe of this, that makes us *meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*: Without *Charity*, as *without Holineſs*, *no*

Man

Man ſhall ſee the Lord; or if he could, it would rather be a Torment than Comfort to him, ſince all the Happineſs of the Sight conſiſts in the Love of Him; the Diſpoſitions and Habits we contract here in this World, will go along with us into the Next, and if we are not inur'd to the Love and Practice of thoſe Virtues, which make up our future Felicity, 'twill be impoſſible to find any Satisfaction in them: For as a viciated Palate can taſte no pleaſant Food; neither can a corrupt Mind have any Reliſh of divine Delights and Satisfactions; ſo that an uncharitable Perſon would be Miſerable even in Heaven, if it were poſſible for him to get there, becauſe he is not diſpos'd to take Pleaſure in the Happineſs of that Place.

And therefore to Qualify us for the Bleſſedneſs of the next Life, we muſt transform our Minds into the Love of Vertue in This; for the whole Employment and Happineſs of Heaven conſiſts, in the Love of God and one another; and if we are not now thus Charitably affected towards both, we ſhall never arrive to thoſe Regions of Bliſs and Glory.

But, How may we attain to this excellent Grace of *Charity*. Why, Firſt,

by Accuſtoming our Selves to the ſeveral Acts of it here; for as all other Habits, ſo is this acquir'd by Action; the frequent Repetition whereof inſinuates into the Affection, and by degrees beget a Love and Liking of it: There is a Sweetneſs and Delight in doing Good, that recommends it to all that practice it; And as the Reward of it is above any other Treaſure, ſo is the Reliſh of it far beyond all other Pleaſures whatever.

Cuſtom, we know, makes any thing Eaſy and Delightſom, and by inuring our ſelves to Acts of Vertue and *Charity*, we ſhall find that Facility and Comfort in them, that will, in a great meaſure, render them their own Reward; and that will not only reconcile us to them, but make us look out for Opportunities of Exerciſing them.

But the better to attain to this excellent Grace, we muſt learn to Govern all our Actions towards Others,

Firſt, By the Love we bear to our Selves: And,

Secondly, By the Love that Chriſt bears to us all: Theſe are the Two Golden Rules of Reaſon and Religion, by which if we ſteer our Courſe, 'twill be almoſt impoſſible for us to do amiſs.

For

For the *First*, The Love we bear to our Selves is ſincere and conſtant; for *no Man ever yet hated his own Fleſh, but loveth and cheriſheth it*, rather too much, than too little: There is none but Wiſhes well to Himſelf from his very Heart, and thoſe Wiſhes ever produce ſome Endeavours that may be the better for us, and if we make theſe the Rule and Standard of our Actions towards others, we ſhall never ſtray from the Paths of *Charity*; this will make *our Love unfeigned, and without Diſſimulation*; for no Man falſifies or diſſembles with Himſelf, nor would he willingly find ſuch Dealing from any other; and if Men would make this the Meaſure of their Actions to others, Deceit and Guile would not go out of their Mouths, nor Fraud and Falſhood be found in their Streets; but contrary-wiſe, Men would be Faithful and Helpful to each other, and *Love, not in Word and in Tongue only, but in Deed and in Truth.* We are then (as we are requir'd) to Love *our Neighbour as our Selves*, that is, with a like, though not always an equal Affection; And *to Do to all Men, as we would they ſhould Do to us*, making every One's Condition our own,

1 John 3. 18.

and being Affected towards them, as if it were ſo; this would learn us this Vertue, and make us Charitably diſpos'd to all Men.

But there is another and better Rule to direct us in this Matter, and that is, The Love that Jeſus Chriſt bears to us all; the Love of our ſelves may be faulty ſometimes in the Defect, and oftener, in the Exceſs; it may be imperfect or inordinate, and therefore our Bleſſed Saviour hath made his Love to us, the
John 13. 34. Meaſure and Standard of our Love to one another. *A new Commandment* (ſaith he) *give I unto you, That ye Love one another, as I have Loved you.* His Love to Mankind was Pure and Perfect, without Diſſimulation, and free from all Defect or Alloy; it extended to his very Enemies, and even to the laying down his own Life for thoſe, who had many Ways forfeited Theirs: He is ſtill preventing us with his Loving-kindneſs; and exceeds, not only our Deſerts, but our very Wiſhes, *Doing for us more abundantly than we can either ask or think.* This great Example ſhould quicken us to Imitation, the frequent Meditation whereof is ſufficient to kindle in our Breaſts the Flames

of

of *Charity*; and not only ſo, but to keep them ſtill burning towards God, and one Another for his ſake. Wherefore, *my Brethren, be ye Followers of God, as dear Children, and walk in Love, as Chriſt alſo hath Loved you.*

BRITISH 4 MR 79 MUSEUM

An

An ACCOUNT OF THE *APPENDIX.*

Containing ſome farther Diſcourſes, ſuitable to the foregoing Subject, and uſeful for the preſent Times.

THE Firſt *whereof relates to the great Duty of* Prayer, *ſhewing, That a ſtanding* Liturgy, *or ſet preſcribed Forms of* Prayer, *ſerve better to preſerve the Reverence and Harmony of* Divine Worſhip, *than ſudden and extemporary* Effuſions: *From* Pſalm 89. 7. God

is

is greatly to be feared in the Assemblies of his Saints, and to be had in Reverence of all that are round about Him.

This Sermon was Preached and Printed for the Satisfaction of an Eminent Dissenter, *Who had some Scruples from a Passage in the First Sermon, by way of* Introduction, *Pag.* 9, 10, 11. *The Vindication whereof, in the following Discourse, had that good Effect upon many of the Hearers, that occasioned their utter Abandoning the separate Meetings of Sectaries, and firmly Adhereing to the Publick Prayers of the Church.* The Second Edition.

The Second *Sermon hath for its Subject, the Excellent Vertue of* Moderation, *recommended to Us by St.* Paul *in the* 4th *Chapter to the* Philippians, *Verse*

Verſe the 5th, Let your Moderation be known unto all Men, the Lord is at hand. *Where the true Notion of that Virtue is ſet forth, and inculcated upon Us, being of a great Uſe in the whole Courſe of our Lives and Converſation. And likewiſe a a falſe Notion of* Moderation *conſidered and confuted, as the Occaſion of many and great Evils, both to Church and State.*

The Whole cloſes up with a Diſcourſe of the many and great Benefits of Unanimity; *together with the great Miſchief and Danger of* Diviſions; *from the* 2 Cor. 13. *and Part of the* 11th *Verſe:* Finally, Brethren, Be of one Mind, live in Peace, and the God of Love and Peace ſhall be with you.

THE

THE EXPEDIENCY OF A *PUBLICK LITURGY* To Preserve the REVERENCE OF Publick Worship.

PSALM lxxxix. 7.

God is greatly to be feared in the Assemblies of his Saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him.

THESE words are a brief Direction how to behave our selves in the House and Presence of God; which we are here told, must be with Fear

Fear and Reverence. The occaſion of them was from the *Pſalmiſt*'s deep and ſerious Contemplation of the Works of God; together with thoſe glorious Attributes and Perfections, that ſhine ſo brightly in them: The Meditation whereof fill'd his Heart with Joy, and his Mouth with the Praiſes of his Maker. The *Pſalm* begins with a Song in Praiſe
Verſ. 1. of his Goodneſs; *My Song ſhall be always of the loving Kindneſs of the Lord; with my Mouth will I ſhew forth his Truth, from one Generation to another.* And after ſome remarkable Inſtances of it, he breaks out in Admiration of his Greatneſs, ſay-
Verſ. 5. ing, *The Heavens ſhall praiſe his wondrous Works, and the Earth ſhall ſound forth the Glory of his Power.* In a word, the Infinite Wiſdom, Bounty, Truth, and Faithfulneſs of God appear'd in ſuch lively Colours, ſtamp'd upon all the Works of his Hands, that made him in the Verſe
Verſ. 6. before the Text to cry out, *Who in the Heavens can be compar'd unto the Lord? or what is he among the gods that can be liken'd unto him?* And then, to imprint the greater awe and dread of him upon our Minds, he adds theſe words, *God is greatly to be feared in the Aſſemblies of his Saints, and to be had in Reverence of all that draw nigh to him.* The



The Senſe of which Words, I ſhall briefly ſumm up and handle in this plain *Propoſition*; viz.

That all our Addreſſes to the Divine Majeſty muſt be accompanied with a Holy Fear and Reverence: *God is greatly to be fear'd*, &c.

In treating of this Propoſition, I ſhall not need to inſiſt much upon the proof of it: For the bare Light of Nature will teach us, that the Worſhip of God is to be perform'd with the greateſt Solemnity and Reverence.

For this being the Homage we are to pay to the Supream Being, or the juſt Acknowledgment we owe to our great Creator, *Reaſon* wills that it be done with all imaginable Deference and Humility: And ſince we receive and expect all from him, 'twill farther teach us, that the profoundeſt Reverence and Veneration we can pay to him, muſt come vaſtly ſhort of his infinite Excellencies and Perfections.

But if the Light of *Nature* and *Reaſon* were more dim and defective in this Point, than it is, The Light of *Scripture* would abundantly ſupply it: for there we read many clear and expreſs Precepts to this purpoſe.

The

The Royal *Pſalmiſt*, in our Text, makes this to be a Tribute due to the infinite Greatneſs and Glory of our Maker; *God is greatly to be feared*, ſaith he, *in the Aſſemblies of his Saints, and to be had in reverence of all that draw nigh to him.* And therefore he calls upon the greateſt Perſons, even the Princes and Potentates of
Pſal. 2. the Earth, to *ſerve the Lord with fear*, and to *rejoyce before him with trembling.* Yea, we find God Almighty challenging
Mal. 1. 6. this Homage from us: *If I be a Father, where is my Honour? If I be a Maſter, where is my Fear? ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.* And elſewhere he threatens the Neglect, and encourages the Performance of this
1 Sam. 2. Duty: *Them that honour me, I will honour;*
30. *and they that deſpiſe me, ſhall be lightly eſteem'd.*

In the *New Teſtament* we are call'd
Heb. 12. upon to *ſerve God acceptably, with reve-*
28. *rence, and godly fear:* Implying, that our Service cannot be acceptable, unleſs it be attended with theſe things.

I ſhall therefore take this for granted, as a Matter wherein we are all agreed, that God is to be ſerv'd with Reverence and godly Fear. The great things to be conſider'd in this caſe are, What this Reverence is, and how it may be beſt ex-

expreſs'd or perform'd in the Worſhip of God? Accordingly therefore in handling of theſe words, I ſhall enquire,

Firſt, Into the Nature of this Reverence, that is requir'd in the Service of God, and ſhew wherein it conſiſts.

Secondly, Into the *Manner*, how it may be beſt obſerv'd and ſecured in the Publick Aſſemblies. I begin with the

Firſt, which is to ſhew the *Nature* of this Reverence, and wherein it conſiſts. In order to which, I ſay in general, That Reverence is ſuch a Religious ſenſe of the Glory and Greatneſs of the Divine Majeſty, as engages us to behave our ſelves becomingly in his preſence. And this is partly *Internal*, and partly *External*.

Internal Reverence conſiſts in the awful Apprehenſions of the *Mind*, concerning the Greatneſs of the Perſon, we addreſs to.

External Reverence conſiſts in the decent Demeanour of the *Outward Man*, by well ordering of our words and geſtures in our Applications to him. The *former* is the Reverence of the *Soul*, and the *latter* of the *Body*; *both* which are to attend us into the Houſe of *God*, and to be carefully minded in our ſerving of him.

(1) I ſay, There is an *Inward* Reverence of the *Soul*, that is to accompany Divine Worſhip: And this conſiſts in awful Apprehenſions of the Mind, concerning him, we draw nigh to. This is hinted to us in the Firſt part of our Text; *God is greatly to be feared in the Aſſemblies of the Saints*; That is, our Minds are to be poſſeſſed with a profound and awful Dread of the Divine Majeſty, in our approaches to him: which the Apoſtle ſtiles a *Godly fear*: And this ariſeth from a ſenſe of our infinite diſtance from God, and of our daily and neceſſary dependance upon him. For when we conſider, how vaſtly the great Sovereign of the World, is above ſinful Duſt and Aſhes; and are ſo affected with the Thoughts of it, as never to appear before him but with the deepeſt Humility, and Lowlineſs of Mind; when we entertain ſuch mean and abject thoughts of our ſelves, and our own vileneſs, as even to bluſh, and be aſham'd to approach ſo great a Preſence; when, I ſay, we have ſuch a true ſenſe of this infinite diſtance and diſproportion between him and us, then are we ſaid, to *fear God in the Aſſemblies of the Saints*, and to have a Religious Awe and Dread when we draw nigh unto him. Now

Now to beget this holy Fear and Dread in us, we are frequently in our thoughts to descend to a particular Consideration, of the infinite Attributes and Perfections of our Maker; and this will help to screw up our Minds to a due pitch of Reverence and Veneration for him.

Thus if we Consider,

1. The infinite *Power* of God, *who made the World, and all things in it*, by the Word of his Mouth; who, as he spake them all into Being, so can he speak them back again into Nothing, when he pleases: And then think with our selves, that 'tis this great and glorious Being, that in our Publick Assemblies we are speaking to, and attending upon, This will strike our Minds with a holy Awe and Dread of him; and make us afraid to dally with such an immense and powerful Being. Again,

2. If we Ponder upon the infinite *Knowledge* of God, *who searches the heart, and understandeth our thoughts long before hand*; that *his Eyes behold, and his Eyelids try the Children of Men*; that *all things are open and naked before him*, and nothing can be hid from his Presence; And then consider, That 'tis this All-knowing and Heart-searching Being, that in our Pub-

lick Assemblies we address to, This will farther imprint this Sacred Awe and Dread upon our Souls, and keep us from all Irreverence in so great a Presence. Moreover,

3. If we take into our Consideration the manifold *Mercies* and transcendent *Goodness* of God, *who giveth us life, and breath, and all things*; upon whose Bounty we entirely depend: If we call to Mind, that he is daily heaping his Mercies and Blessings upon us; that we live wholly upon him, and cannot subsist one moment without him: And then Consider, That 'tis this gracious and bountiful Being that in our Publick Assemblies we are directing our Worship to, This will make us *fear the Lord for his goodness*, and so fix our Minds in the Love and Contemplation of him, that we shall be both ashamed and afraid to offend so great and good a Benefactor.

Hos. 3. 5.

Lastly, If we Consider how infinitely *Jealous* and tender God Almighty is of his *honour*, and that he whom we Address to, will not be mock'd with Vain and Hypocritical Pretences of Serving of him: That he is to be lov'd *with all our Heart, and all our Mind, and all our Strength*; and will not be Rival'd by the World, the Flesh,

Fleſh, or the Devil, in the acts of Worſhip: And then call to mind, that in our Publick Aſſemblies we are Serving this *Jealous God*, who watches all the Wandrings of our Heart from him, This will make us, in the *Pſalmiſt*'s Phraſe, to *ſerve the Lord with fear*; and even to *rejoice before him with trembling*. Ex. 19. Pſalm 2.

In a word, if we ſeriouſly meditate on the boundleſs and adorable *Perfections* of the Divine Nature, and bethink with our ſelves *who* and *what* that God is, in whoſe Preſence we are, when we enter his Houſe, and offer up our Prayers and Praiſes to him, 'Twill make us bow our Souls before him, and create thoſe devout and awful Apprehenſions of him, in which this *Inward reverence* and *Godly fear* doth mainly conſiſt.

And this is one Reaſon, why the Publick *Liturgy* of our *Church*, was caſt into ſo many *ſhort Prayers* or *Collects*, each of which beginning with ſome *Attribute* or *Perfection* of God, proper to uſher in the Petition that follows it, is thereby fitted, both to keep up the Reverence and Attention of the Mind in asking it; and to quicken our Faith and Hopes of obtaining it.

And ſo much briefly of that *Inward* fear

and reverence that is to attend all our Addreſſes to the Divine Majeſty, held forth in thoſe words, *God is greatly to be feared in the Aſſemblies of his Saints.*

Now theſe Internal awful Apprehenſions of the Mind concerning God, are to be expreſs'd,

(2.) By the *Outward* Reverence of the *Body*; which conſiſts in the well-ordering of our *words* and *geſtures* in our Applications to him. And this is held forth to us in the *laſt* words of the Text; *And to be had in Reverence of all that are round about him.*

That *Reverence* relates to the *Outward Man*, and implies becoming geſtures and behaviour of the *Body*, is evident, not only from the Nature of the thing, but from the univerſal Conſent and Practice of Mankind; who have always ſhewed their Reſpect this way, to thoſe that are above them.

2Sam.9.6. *Mephiboſheth* the Son of *Jonathan* fell on his Face and did Reverence to *David.*

1Kings1. 31. *Bathſheba* bowed her Face to the Earth, and did Reverence to the King. All the

Eſth.3.2. King's Servants bowed and did Reverence to *Haman.* By which it appears, that humble and decent Poſtures of the Body, have been ever reckon'd to be Tokens of Reſpect and Reverence. That

That this *External* Reverence is to be us'd likewiſe in the *Worſhip* of God, is evident too from many Precepts and Examples in *Holy Scripture*. St. *Paul* beſeeches the *Romans*, to *preſent their bodies, as a living, holy and acceptable Sacrifice unto God; which is our reaſonable Service*. Where the Apoſtle calls the preſenting our *bodies* a *living Sacrifice*, in Oppoſition to the *dead bodies* that were *offer'd* to him under the *Law*: And becauſe *brute beaſts* and *irrational* Creatures were then offer'd up. He ſtiles the preſenting *our bodies* a *reaſonable* Service; which as it is more holy, ſo it is a more fitting and acceptable Preſent to our Maker. The ſame Apoſtle exhorts the *Corinthians*, to *glorifie God with their bodies*, as well as Souls; which is to be done by reverent and becoming Geſtures in his Service. And to engage them thereunto, tells them, that they are *both* his, and muſt be *both* dedicated to him. He that breath'd into us a Living and Immortal *Soul*, did likewiſe frame the *Body* to be a fit Manſion and Companion for it; and united them together for his Service: And therefore juſtly expects the Homage and Service of *both*. Yea, he further adds, that Chriſt re-

Ro. 12. 1.

1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.

deemed the Body as well as the Soul from *the bondage of Corruption*: And God hath promiſed to glorifie *both hereafter*: And therefore *both* are requir'd to glorifie him *here*.

The Truth is, an inward Reverence for God will always draw after it the Reverence of the outward Man; And where the Mind is poſſeſs'd with awful Apprehenſions of the divine Majeſty, it will diſcover it ſelf in the External Decency, both of Words and Actions. And accordingly we find, that good Men, in all Ages, have taken Care, not only to keep up a Religious Awe and Dread of God in their *Souls*, but have been as careful, likewiſe, to expreſs it by External *Acts* and Poſtures of the *Body*.

Now what outward Geſtures are moſt expreſſive of Honour and Reverence, the Practice of the *Church*, and the Cuſtom of the *Country* where we live, will be the beſt Guides to direct us. Lam. 3. 41. *Uncovering* of the *Head*, *Bowing* the *Body*, *putting off the Shooes*, *Kneeling*, *Proſtration*, *lifting up* the *Eyes* and *Hands unto Heaven*, have been *Ancient* Signs and Tokens of *Honour*. The Lord commanded *Moſes* to *put off his Shooes*, becauſe the Ex. 3. 5. place whereon he ſtood was *Holy Ground*:

And

And to this *Solomon* alludes, when he directs Men to look to their *Feet*, when they *enter* into the *House of God.* *Joshua* *fell on his Face to the Earth, and worshiped God.* And *David* calls upon Men to *worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker:* by which we may observe, That *Discalceation, Kneeling*, and *Prostrating*, were the usual Expressions of outward Reverence under the *Old Testament.* In the *New*, we find *uncovering* the *Head* to be made a part of that *bodily* Reverence that is to be used in Religious Assemblies. And our Blessed *Saviour*'s Example hath made *kneeling* the proper Posture of Devotion: For in his *Prayers to his Father*, we find him upon his *Knees*, the *Evangelists* frequently relating, That he *kneeled down and prayed.*

Eccl. 5. 1. Josh. 5. 14. Psal. 95. 6, 7. 1 Cor. 11. 7. Luke 24. 41.

In *our* Days. *Uncovering* the *Head*, *Standing*, and *Kneeling*, are the proper Postures and Expressions of Reverence.

Hence we are wont to rise up to our Superiors, and to be uncovered in their Presence, as a Token of Respect to them. When we offer a Petition to a Prince, we do it upon our Knees. To sit in the Presence of a great Man, is reckon'd a great Rudeness; and he that presents a Petition to a King in that Posture, in stead of

of an Anſwer, will meet with nothing but Frowns and a Rebuke.

Now that which is irreverent and unmannerly, when done to Men, can never be any part of Reverence towards God: For God, as he juſtly may, expects the beſt things, that we have; and will be ſerv'd in the humbleſt manner, that we can: Otherwiſe, we incurr that heavy Curſe, denounced by the Prophet *Malachi*, againſt ſuch as having in their Flock a *Male*, will yet vow and ſacrifice
Mal. 1. 14. unto God a *corrupt thing*. And therefore to ſit at our Prayers, as the manner of ſome is, and to offer up our Petitions to God in a careleſs, lolling, and ſlovenly Poſture, as too many do, is one of the rudeſt Affronts that can be offer'd to the Majeſty of Heaven; and we may well think, that ſuch an Indignity will be one Day anſwered with the greateſt Indignation. God Almighty hath declar'd, That he will not accept the *blind*, or the *lame*, for *Sacrifice*; nor be put off with ſuch rude and unworthy Services, as would be reckon'd an Abuſe to an earthly Prince. And therefore we find him thus upbraiding thoſe that preſent him with ſuch offerings, *Go and offer it*, ſaith he,
Mal. 1. 8. *to thy Governour, and ſee whether he will be*

pleaſed

pleased with thee, or accept thy Person: And sure they must have very low and mean Thoughts of *God*, who think *that* Service good enough for *him*, which would be thought *saucy* and *unmannerly* when done to his *Creatures*.

But our *Text*, if well attended to, would teach these Men *better manners* in all their approaches to their Maker. For that tells them, That *God is greatly to be feared*, by the inward Dread and Awfulness of the *Mind*; and *to be had in Reverence*, by the outward Decency and Humility of the *Body*: And *both* these are to accompany them to the publick Assemblies, and to be carefully minded, by all that draw nigh unto him.

And thus having describ'd the Reverence that is to be observ'd in the Worship of God, I shall add no more under this Head; but to admonish you to be mindful of *both* parts of it, in all your solemn Addresses to him; that is, to possess your *hearts* with awful Apprehensions of him; and to compose your *bodies* into all the decent Postures of Humility and Adoration. So shall you *serve God acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear*, and thereby *find Grace to help in time of need*.

From whence I proceed; *Se-*

Secondly, To consider the *Way* and *Manner* how this Reverence may be best expres's'd and secured in the *Publick Assemblies*.

To this end we must note, That there are *two ways* of celebrating the *Publick Worship* and *Service* of *God*; and they are either

First, By a *Publick Liturgy*, or well-compos'd *Forms* of Prayer, wherein both the *Matter* and *Words* are digested and prepared to our Hands; or,

Secondly, By *Extemporary Effusions*, where *both* these are left to the sudden Conceptions of him that Prayeth.

The *former* is the Establish'd way of the *Church of England*, wherein she treads in the Steps of all *Antiquity*; there being no settl'd *Church* from the *days* of the *Apostles*, to the *present Age*, but what hath perform'd their publick Worship by a *Liturgy*, or *set Forms* of Prayer.

The *latter* is the way of *Dissenters*; who have herein broke off from the Ancient Practice of all *Christian* Churches; and have been unhappily misled into it *by the cunning Craftiness of some, who lay in wait to deceive.*

My Business then at present will be, to examine which of these two Ways best

tends

tends to promote and preſerve that holy Reverence of Body and Mind before deſcrib'd; that is, whether by *ſet Forms*, or *ſudden Effuſions*, God is moſt *fear'd in the Aſſemblies of the Saints, and had in Reverence of thoſe that draw near to him.*

But before I enter upon the Diſcuſſion of this Point, I ſhall *prepare* my way to it, by *premiſing* theſe four or five things. And the

Firſt, is, To aſſure you that I have no Deſign of offending or provoking any Perſon; well knowing that *the wrath of Man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God* Jam. 1. 20. I call God to witneſs, That my only Aim is to inform and ſettle your Judgment aright, in a Matter wherein your own Welfare, as well as the Peace, Unity, and Edification of the Church are ſo deeply concerned. St *Paul* bare Record concerning the *Iſraelites*, that they had a *Zeal*, which yet in ſome things, was *not according to knowledge*; meaning, Rom. 10. 1, 2. That they had ſome *miſtaken* Notions concerning the Law, and the Righteouſneſs of it, wherein they needed better Information. And therefore he not only *prayed that Iſrael might be ſaved, but inſtructed* them too in the right *way* and *method of Salvation.* And there are ſome likewiſe

likewiſe in *our* Days, who may have a *good Meaning* towards *God*, and yet may *miſtake* their *way*, and ſtand in need of a *Guide* to direct their *good Intentions*. And if, by the Example of this great Apoſtle, I ſhall endeavour to rectifie the miſguided Zeal of ſuch Perſons, and to help forward their growth in Grace and Knowledge, I cannot doubt their kind Acceptance of my good Will; and that they will candidly hear and receive, what is ſo honeſtly meant and tender'd to them. Let me therefore beſpeak you in the Words of St. *Peter*, to *lay aſide all guile, and all malice, and hypocriſie, and envying, and evil ſpeaking: And as new-born babes, deſire the ſincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby.*

1 Pet. 2. 1, 2.

2. The *next* thing to be *premis'd* is, That the Queſtion at preſent, is *not* about the *Lawfulneſs* of *Forms* of Prayer; for this is now generally *granted* by all ſober *Diſſenters*; and indeed 'twere ſtrange if it ſhould not, when our Bleſſed *Saviour* himſelf preſcrib'd a *Form*, and commanded his Diſciples and Followers to uſe it; yea, when the Prayers we find offered up by our Saviour, conſiſted of *Forms*: For the Evangeliſts tell us, That *he prayed three times, ſaying the ſame Words.*

Luk. 11. 1.

And

And as Forms of Prayer in *general*, ſo *ours* in particular are, by the far greateſt part of *Diſſenters*, adjudged to be lawful; for they can, and do frequently join with us in the uſe of them, and maintain occaſional Communion with us in them; which they would not do, if they thought them unlawful.

So that they are not now frighted from our Service, by the hard Names of *Baal*, and *Dagon*, and *Babylon*, and *Maſs-Service*, and the like; which ſome deſigning Men, to create Schiſms and Diviſions among us, formerly put upon it: But ever ſince they have been perſwaded to come near it, and to be better acquainted with it, all theſe Bugbears vaniſh; and it appears to be not only a tolerable, but a pious and wholeſome Model of Devotion.

3. As we are Agreed about the *Lawfulneſs* of *Forms*, ſo neither doth *our Church* condemn all uſe of more *free* and *conceiv'd* Prayers in their *due* time and place. For in our *private* and *ſecret* Prayers, wherein we are to confeſs our own particular Sins, and to lay before God our own particular Wants and Neceſſities, we are allow'd to enlarge our ſelves, as we ſhall think meet.

But becauſe the publick Worſhip ought

to

to be so fram'd and worded, that all may know *what* they are to *join in* and *say Amen to*, therefore all *Christian Churches* have thought a standing *Liturgy* most expedient to preserve the Unity and Harmony of divine Worship; that *Christians* may *with one heart and one mouth glorifie* their great Creator.

But in *private* they are left at Liberty to their own conceiv'd Devotions; and may use their own or others Expressions, as they find them best suit with their Necessities and Occasions: Yea, even in *publick* too, in some extraordinary Cases, wherein the Church hath made no Provision, Ministers are not restrain'd from a sober and decent Exercise of their own Abilities; provided it be done with Prudence and a due Submission to Authority. In short, then, the Question in Debate is,

Whether the Reverence and Solemnity of *Publick Worship* be not better provided for and secured by *well composed Forms*, than by leaving Men to their own free and *Extemporary Effusions*.

And that we may advance by degrees, to the better clearing of this Point, I shall *premise*,

4. That a *compos'd* Address is always esteemed a Token of greater Reverence

and

and Reſpect, than *ſudden* and *unpremeditated* Speech: For the *one* betokens a due Senſe of the Greatneſs of the Perſon we addreſs to, before whom we dare not venture to utter any thing raſhly or haſtily; the *other* betrays mean Thoughts of the Perſon with whom we think fit to make ſo bold. And therefore we never addreſs to Princes, but in a compos'd form of words; to ſhew the awe and ſenſe we have of their greatneſs: we bind up our Tongues to a form of Speech, leſt by letting them looſe, we ſhould unawares fall into thoſe Indecencies, that might rather Affront than Honour the Majeſty we addreſs to. And if this be a piece of Reſpect to be ſhewed to *Men* like our ſelves, to take a due care of our Words and Behaviour in ſpeaking to them, can any think fit to make ſo bold with their *Maker*, as to vent any thing of a ſudden before him? Certainly, the Reverence we owe to the *Supream* Being, ought not to be leſs than that we are wont to pay to *Inferiour Creatures*: And therefore what is irreverent when done to *them*, muſt be much more ſo when done to *him*; for 'tis not to be imagin'd, that the *King of Kings* ſhould have a leſs regard to his Honour, than

Earthly Princes: and consequently, it must be absurd and irrational to treat the Majesty of Heaven, who is infinitely above the Kings and Potentates of the Earth, more rudely than we are wont to do the Works of his own Hands.

But to advance farther in this Point, I shall *premise*,

5. That God Almighty is not to be wrought upon, either by the multitude or variety of Words: and therefore neither of these can be any token of Reverence and Respect to him. And because *here* lies the *main* Error and Mistake in this Matter, I shall *enlarge* here a little the more, that we may the better discover and remove it.

I say then, That the novelty and variety of *Expressions* in Prayer, hath *no* manner of Efficacy or Acceptance at all with *God*. For we find him often condemning, but never commending the use of them: These things may indeed do much with *Men*, who must be inform'd of our Wants, before they can relieve them; and being led mostly by their Passions, are often mov'd by the Arts and Importunity of Speech; but *God* Almighty, who knows our Necessities before we ask, and is above and without

all

all manner of Paſſions, is not to be mov'd or prevail'd upon by theſe Arts. So that to think that God is taken with many and new Words, is to think him ſuch a one as our ſelves; yea, 'tis to rank him among the worſt and meaneſt ſort: for Wiſe Men eaſily ſee through theſe Arts; and 'tis only the blind and weaker part of Mankind, that are led or influenc'd by them. And therefore *Solomon* wills us to expreſs the ſenſe of our great diſtance from him, by the Paucity and Diſcretion of our words; *for God is in Heaven*, ſaith he, *and we are upon Earth; therefore our words unto him ſhould be few.* Eccl. 5. 2.

Indeed, to ſpeak properly, Prayer is not the Work of the *Tongue*, or a Matter of *Words*, but the Work and Buſineſs of the *Soul*: and conſiſts not ſo much in lifting up the *Voice*, as in the Elevation of the *Heart* unto God. *Moſes* is ſaid to *cry unto the Lord*, when he *utter'd not a word*: and *Hannah ſpake in her heart, and prayed*, when her *voice* was *not heard*. And we find St. *James* aſcribing the *Efficacy* and *Succeſs* of our Prayers, not to the nimbleneſs and volubility of the *Tongue*, but to the inward workings and warmth of the *Heart*; telling us that the *inwrought fervent Prayer of the Righteous*, (for ſo the word imports) *availeth much*. The Exod. 14. 15. 1 Sam. 1. 13. Jam. 5. 16. Δέησις ἐνεργουμένη.

The truth is, Oſtentation and Vanity is commonly ſeen in many words; and Pride lurketh under a Profuſeneſs of Speech: Whereas Modeſty and Reverence, the much better qualifications of a Petitioner, are beſt ſeen in few and well-weigh'd Expreſſions; and theſe evermore find the beſt acceptance: for 1 Pet. 5. 5. *God* and *Man* too *reſiſt the proud*; and *both* conſpire to *ſhew grace* and *favour to the humble*. A bold arrogant Petitioner, that comes rather to ſhew his Parts, than his Wants, and runs out his Petition into length and multiplicity of words, is commonly diſmiſs'd with frowns and a repulſe; and they that are thus *full of themſelves*, are *ſent empty away*: whereas an humble Petitioner, that comes with a deep ſenſe of his own defects, and the greater excellencies of him he applies to, and manifeſts both theſe by the humility of his Words and Geſtures, generally finds an eaſie acceſs, and a kind acceptance.

A plain inſtance hereof we have in the *Phariſee* and the *Publican*. The poor *Publican*, out of a deep ſenſe of his own Luke 18. 9, 10, 11. &c. unworthineſs, had ſcarce confidence enough to *lift up his eyes unto Heaven*, *but ſmote upon his breaſt*; and with a profound

ſound humility of Soul and Body utter'd only this *ſhort Form* of Prayer, *God be merciful to me a ſinner*. Well, and what was the effect of theſe few and hearty words? why God Almighty was well pleas'd with the humble Sincerity of his Addreſs, and ſent him home juſtified to his own Houſe. The proud *Phariſee*, on the other hand, comes with his long Prayers, and ſpins out his Petition into a multitude and variety of Expreſſions, beſtowing many *good words* upon *himſelf*, as a Saint of the higheſt form; *God, I thank thee, I am not as other men*, &c. and many *bad words* on *others*, and eſpecially on the poor *Publican*: But what was the iſſue of this bold and vaunting Harangue? why, our *Saviour* condemn'd him for an arrant *Hypocrite*, and ſharply rebuk'd his vain babling. The *one* by being low in his *own* eyes, roſe the higher in *God's*: the *other* by exalting himſelf, fell into the greater Scorn and Contempt. By which it evidently appears, that 'tis not the multitude or variety of words, that is pleaſing unto God: for though much ſpeaking may (as one hath obſerv'd) ſtorm the *Ear*, yet 'tis Modeſty and Humility that takes the *Heart*.

Laſtly, There is one thing more to be

premis'd, and that is, that ſudden and unpremeditated Speech is liable to many *Indecencies* and *Imperfections*; yea, ſuch as oftener ſtand in need of a *Pardon*, than procure *Acceptance*. *Solomon* hath told us, That *in the multitude of words there wanteth not ſin; and he that is haſty of ſpeech uttereth folly.* 'Tis hard, when the Tongue hath too great a liberty, to prevent its Extravagance: and this *unruly Member* is not eaſily confin'd within the rules of Decency.

Prov. 10. 19.

Experience ſhews, that in long and ſudden Speeches, many things are ſaid, that had been better not to have been ſpoke. And he that conſiders what raw, indigeſted Speeches have proceeded out of the Mouths of ſuch as have taken this liberty in their Prayers to God, will ſee great reaſon to tye up the Tongue to the good Behaviour, and to beg Pardon for the Irreverence of ſuch Addreſſes. *David* reſolv'd to *keep his mouth as it were with a bridle*, to curb and reſtrain its Extravagance; and, upon great deliberation, ſaid, *I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not in my tongue.* And this we ſhould all do, not only in our Converſation with *Men*, where raſh and unadviſed words frequently occaſion much Evil;

Pſal. 39. 1.

but

but chiefly in our Addreſſes to *God*, where, as the Danger is greater, ſo ſhould our care and circumſpection be ſo too. To which end we ſhould all pray with the *Pſalmiſt*, *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth*, that nothing may paſs through it without due Examination; *and keep the door of my lips*, that no Evil may enter in, or come out of it: And ſuch *a Door-keeper* ought every one to be *in the houſe of God*. Pſ. 141. 3

And thus having a little *prepar'd* the Way, by *premiſing* theſe few things, I ſhall now come cloſer to the Matter in *Queſtion*, and enquire whether a well-compoſed *Liturgy*, or *Forms* of Prayer be not better to preſerve and ſecure that Reverence and Solemnity of Publick Worſhip before deſcrib'd, than *ſudden* and *conceived* Prayers? To which I anſwer, Yes; and ſhall endeavour to demonſtrate it by theſe following Arguments.

Firſt, That which beſt helps us to come *preparedly* to the Publick Worſhip of God, does moſt conduce to preſerve the Reverence that is to be us'd in it: But publick Forms of Prayer do beſt aſſiſt us in making ſuch a Preparation; and therefore muſt conduce moſt to ſecure the Reverence that is to be ſhew'd in it.

That *Preparation* is neceſſary before we approach the Divine Majeſty, I ſuppoſe will be eaſily granted by all that have any ſenſe of his infinite Power and Greatneſs: for without this we ruſh into the Preſence of God, *as the Horſe ruſheth into the Battle*; not conſidering whether we are a going: and therefore we are commanded to *prepare our hearts to ſeek the Lord.*

Jer. 8. 6.

Job. 11. 13.

Now this Preparation is much better helped by a Publick *Liturgy*, than it can be by *Extemporary* Effuſions. For where the Matter of Publick Prayer is digeſted into fit words, there we may peruſe and meditate upon it before-hand; and thereby be aſſiſted to come prepar'd, with Affections ſuitable to it. When we know what we are about to *confeſs*, we may be able to excite that *Sorrow*, that *Shame*, and *Indignation* with our ſelves, that is fit to accompany ſuch a *Confeſſion*. When we know what we are about to *ask*, we may come prepared with a due Senſe of our *want* of it, and with ardent *deſires* of having it ſupply'd. When we know for what *mercies* and *bleſſings* we are about to give *thanks*, we may ſtir up in our hearts that *joy* and inward *ſenſe* of the divine *goodneſs*, that is proper for ſuch *Thanksgivings*.

In

In a word, when we can conſider before-hand for *whom*, and for *what* we are going to addreſs to our Maker, weighing each Petition, and meditating upon the ſundry Attributes and Properties of God Almighty, with which they are uſher'd in, we may ſuit our *affections* to the *matter* and *words* of ſuch an Addreſs, and come ready to *go along* with *all* the Parts of ſuch a Service.

Now this is impoſſible to be done in *ſudden* and *conceiv'd* Prayers; becauſe we cannot know before-hand what will be utter'd: And how can we prepare our ſelves for ſuch an Exerciſe, which we are wholly unacquainted with, and know not either the Matter, or Words, or Order in which it will be delivered? Neither is this poſſible to be known, when the Miniſter himſelf is uncertain before-hand what he ſhall ſay. Such a one may confeſs ſome Sins in publick, which many in the Congregation cannot charge themſelves withal: And ſo may falſly accuſe them before God. He may put up Petitions for things, which may be inexpedient for ſome of them to *ask*, and for God to *grant*.

And how is it poſſible to prepare or bring devout Affections to ſuch a Service?

If

1 Cor. 14. 8. *If the trumpet give an uncertain ſound, who can prepare himſelf to the battle?* If he that officiates be uncertain before-hand what he ſhall *ſay*, and the People uncertain what they ſhall *hear*, as both muſt be when their Prayers are left to *ſudden* Effuſions; there can be *no Preparation* for ſuch a Worſhip; and conſequently *no* due *Reverence* in attending upon it: Which is the *firſt* Argument.

Secondly, That which beſt helps us to *pray with the Underſtanding*, muſt beſt promote the Reverence and Solemnity of publick Worſhip: But a well-compoſed Liturgy beſt helps us to *pray with the Underſtanding*, and therefore beſt promotes the Reverence of divine Worſhip.

That Reverence is mightily promoted by the *Underſtanding* of our *Prayers*, I think is too evident to need any Proof.

For ſince it conſiſts (as we before obſerv'd) in awful Apprehenſions concerning God, it ſuppoſes a due Underſtanding before *whom* we are, and *what* we ſay, in addreſſing to him: Without which we only *offer* him *the Sacrifice of Fools*; Eccl. 5. 4. which *Solomon* tells us he takes no Pleaſure in: For 'tis the *Underſtanding*, that makes our Prayers both a *reaſonable* and *acceptable Service*.

And

And therefore the *Apoſtle* directs Men to *pray with the Underſtanding*, and to uſe ſuch eaſie Terms and Language in the publick Devotion, that the People may be edified; blaming all Praying and Prophecying in an unknown Tongue, or which is all one, in dark, difficult, and myſtical Phraſes; whereby the *mind* is *not edified*, and the *Underſtanding* is *unfruitful*. 1 Cor. 14.

Now herein, likewiſe, a *well-compoſed Form* is of far greater Uſe, than ſudden and conceived Prayer. For in a publick *Liturgy*, all the Expreſſions are well weigh'd and conſider'd; great Care is taken that the Words ſuit the Matter, and that *both* may be made eaſy and intelligible to the People: All the parts of it are deliberately ſcann'd and review'd; that they may be fitted to the *neceſſities*, and likewiſe to the *capacities*, of the whole Congregation: So that the meaneſt Perſon may underſtand it, as well as the greateſt; and *he that occupieth the room of the unlearned*, may apprehend and go along with the whole Service.

This is more than any can be ſecur'd of in *ſudden* and *extempore* Prayers. For *there* the Miniſter being unprovided before-hand of Words, *may* and often *does*, ſpeak

ſpeak very improperly and incoherently; and being forced to utter what firſt comes to head, may let fall ſuch Expreſſions, as neither ſuit the Majeſty of God, nor the Underſtanding of the People. He may be either *confuſed* in his Method, or *obſcure* in his Expreſſions; *darkening ſpeech without knowledge*; and falling upon ſuch *words* and *phraſes*, as a great part of the Congregation may not underſtand: Which yet muſt paſs as they come; there being no way of reviewing or amending ſuch Effuſions.

Theſe and ſuch like Inconveniences, which 'tis well known attend ſuch Prayers, are great Hindrances to true Devotion, and marr the Reverence of publick Worſhip.

In a word, 'tis moſt certain that both Miniſter and People may better *pray with the Underſtanding* in a known *Form*, where the Matter and Words are well digeſted, than they can poſſibly do, where both are left at great Uncertainties. *Second thoughts*, we ſay, in Matters of Moment, are always the *beſt*: And when theſe are cloathed in plain, familiar, and intelligible Terms, they are far to be preferr'd before ſudden and haſty Conceptions: And as two Eyes ſee more than one, ſo

'tis

'tis reaſonable to conceive that a *Synod* or *Convocation* of many able, pious, and learned Divines ſhould better contrive the Matter and Method of publick Worſhip, upon mature Deliberation, than any *ſingle* Perſon can do by his own ſudden and indeliberate Effuſions. This is ſo plain, that one would wonder how 'tis poſſible for Men to be ſeduced into any Thought or Belief of the contrary.

Thirdly, That way of Prayer wherein we may join with greater *Faith* and *Aſſurance* is the moſt ſolemn, and fitteſt to be us'd in publick Worſhip: But this we may better do in a Form than without it; and therefore *that* is the beſt way to ſecure the Reverence and Solemnity of publick Worſhip. That *Faith* and a good *Aſſurance* of *being heard* are neceſſary Ingredients of an *Effectual Prayer*, St. *James* hath plainly told us; for he wills all that would obtain any thing at the Hands of God, to *ask in Faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavers is like a wave of the Sea, driven with the wind, and toſſed: Let not that man think that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unſtable in all his ways.* And our Bleſſed *Saviour* hath told us, That we muſt agree, and join together in what

Jam. 1. 6, 7, 8.

Mat. 18, 19.

we

we ask, before it will be given us. So that a joint *Consent* and *Agreement* in our Prayers, offer'd up in *Faith, without wrath and doubting*, is the best means of procuring to us the Success of them.

Now this may be far better done by a *publick Form*, than it can be by our own *private Conceptions*. For by a standing *Liturgy*, People may be well acquainted with their Prayers, and know beforehand, what they offer unto God; they may be satisfied, that the Matter and Words of their Prayers are so fram'd, as that they will be *both* accepted by him; and so they may the more readily join in them, and say with the *Psalmist*, *Let the words of our mouth as well as the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in thy sight*; for being well assur'd, that what they ask is sound, and the manner of asking it well-pleasing unto God, they may pray with *full assurance of Faith*, and heartily join in a regular and well-composed Devotion, saying *Amen*, to every part of it.

This is more than we can do in conceiv'd or *extempore* Prayers; for not knowing what the Minister will utter, we cannot tell whether we may safely join with him or no, unless we take him to be divinely inspir'd, and so extraordinarily

assisted

assisted from above, that his Tongue cannot faulter, nor his Heart vent any thing amiss. But alas! considering the many Passions and Infirmities, that all Men are subject to, this must be a very unsafe thing to depend upon. For *some* may be unsound in their Principles, and so may vent their Errors in their Prayers: Others may mistake their Choler for Zeal, and so mix their Humours and Passions with their Devotion; by which means, the Publick Offices of Religion, must receive a tincture from Mens corrupt Inclinations, and partake of the Infirmities of those that perform them.

Yea *some* have arriv'd to that degree of Folly, as to tell God Almighty *News* in their Prayers, and to acquaint him with the Affairs and Passages of the Town or Place, where they live. If any have disgusted them, *they* shall hear of it in their Publick Assemblies; where they seek to draw in God Almighty of their side, and to make him a Party in their Quarrels.

Sometimes you shall hear Men praying one *against* another; as in *divided* Places and Congregations it often happens: where you may perceive their different *Opinions* by their *Prayers*; and find

find their little Pets and Grudges mingled and interwoven with their Petitions.

And are not *these* great Indecencies in the Worship of God? Can any wise or good Man join or say *Amen* to such Prayers? Will you call this an acceptable Sacrifice unto God? May he not justly say to *such*, as he did of old to the *Jews*,
Isa. 1. *bring no more such vain Oblations, they are a trouble to me, I am weary to bear them?* Is not this to *offer strange fire unto the Lord*; and such as may justly *kindle* his Wrath against us? And how is it possible to *remedy* these Evils, whilst Men are left to vent what they please, and are only fond of their own Inventions?

Fourthly, That which helps us to perform the Duty of Prayer with the *greatest fervency* and the *least distraction*, must best preserve the Reverence of publick Worship: but this is best done by a publick *Liturgy*; and therefore that must be the most serious and solemn way of Worshiping God. For the better understanding of this Argument, we must call to Mind, what I before *premis'd*, that the Duty of Prayer consists not in *Words*, and much less in the *Novelty* and *Variety* of them: for God Almighty is not

to

to be charm'd by the Arts of Speech, or wrought upon by the importunity of words. No, he understands the most silent breathings of the Soul after him; and hears the Language of those Sighs and Groans that cannot be utter'd; and these things are of greater force and efficacy with him, than the most pompous Rhetorick or flourish of Words. All the use of *words*, in the Service of God, is with respect to *our selves*; that we may join and agree together in our Petitions, and with *one mouth* offer up the *same* Prayers and Praises to God; which renders them the more pleasing and the more prevalent with him.

But whether this be best done by the well-advised words of a *form*, or the sudden Effusions of *conceiv'd* Prayer, is the thing in Question: For the clearing whereof, we must note farther,

That the *inventing of words* in Prayer, which is the *work* of the *Head*, is *one* thing; and the *exciting Affections* suitable to them, which is the *work* of the *Heart*, is *another*: Now, because the Soul of Man is of so limited a Nature in all its Operations, that it cannot attend to two or more things at once, at least so closely and intensely as it can to one, therefore

the *inventing* of *words* in Prayer, which is the exercise of the *Brain*, must needs be a *hindrance* to the Soul in *exciting* the *Affections*, which is the great business of the *Heart*.

Now herein plainly appears the Usefulness and Conveniency of Publick *forms*, in which the *words* being *prepared* to our hands, the Mind hath nothing to do but to *excite* and *employ Affections* suited to them; as namely, to stir up *Sorrow* in *Confessing*, *Desire* in *Petitioning*, *Joy* in *Thanks-giving*, and the like; which cannot be so well done, when other things are to be minded at the same time. And therefore a *form* of Prayer, which gives the Soul full scope and leisure to attend to these things, without calling it off to the study of words, must best promote the inward *fervency* and *devotion* of the *Mind*, in which the life of Prayer doth mainly consist.

And this is true with relation both to the *Minister* and *People*.

The Minister, in a *conceiv'd* Prayer, is wholly employ'd in finding out *Matter*, and putting it into *Words*; which is work enough to take up his Thoughts: and his *Head* being thus *busied* about these things, it must necessarily hinder the

greater

greater work and buſineſs of the *Heart*: ſince the Soul cannot ſo cloſely attend to *both*, at the ſame time.

And as for the *People*, they not knowing what the Miniſter will utter, muſt attend likewiſe, as the words come, to the ſenſe of them; and bethink with themſelves whether they may ſafely join in them: And ſo the People too are put upon *Studying*, inſtead of *Praying*; and many times, before they can do this, the Miniſter goes too faſt for them; and whilſt they are conſidering *one* thing, he is gone to *another*: by which means they muſt be often at a loſs, and their Devotion miſerably diſtracted and confounded.

Whereas in a well compoſed *form*, all this trouble is ſaved; for the *Matter* and *Words* being well known and conſider'd before, there will be no need of employing the Mind, either in *inventing*, or in *judging* of the ſenſe or ſoundneſs of our Prayers; but being well ſatisfied of this before-hand, the Soul hath nothing to do, but to apply it ſelf to the Duty *without diſtraction*: by which means, the *Affections* may keep pace with the *Words*; and the *Heart* go all along with the *Prayers*.

Fifthly, That Way of Worſhip, in which the whole *Matter* of Prayer may

be beſt compriz'd in full and comprehenſive *ſenſe*, and likwiſe beſt digeſted into due *Order* and *Method*, is certainly the moſt reverent and ſolemn Way of Publick Worſhip: But *both* theſe may be far better done in a Publick *Liturgy*, than by *ſudden* Effuſions; and therefore that muſt be the moſt ſolemn and reverent Way of Publick Worſhip.

That the *whole matter* of Prayer is to be compriz'd and taken care of in Publick Worſhip, is evident, becauſe if it be *defective* in any part, the People may *go without* ſome Bleſſings for want of asking: If it be *redundant*, they may *ask and not receive, becauſe they ask amiſs*: So that nothing *neceſſary* ought to be *omitted*, and nothing *needleſs* and *ſuperfluous* ought to be *asked* in our Publick Worſhip.

Now, that theſe things may be better taken care of in a ſtanding *Liturgy*, than by ſuddenly *conceiv'd* and *extempore* Prayers, is no leſs evident; becauſe in the *one*, *all* that we are allow'd or requir'd to pray for, that is, all things that are agreeable to the Will of God, and neceſſary for the Wants of the People, may be duly conſider'd and digeſted into proper and particular Forms, as they are in

our

our excellent Liturgy: where the *daily matter* of our Prayers being ſtill the *ſame*, is ſumm'd up in *general Confeſſions*, *Petitions*, and *Thankſgivings*; in which, as all People are concern'd, ſo they all may and ought heartily to join in; and as for other *occaſional* Wants, *they* are provided for in particular *Forms* and *Collects*, as the Exigence of *Times* and *Neceſſities* require.

Whereas in *extempore* Prayer theſe things cannot be ſo wiſely taken care of: for in *that*, *ſome* things through haſt and incogitancy may be *omitted*, that ought to be pray'd for; *other* things, through weakneſs and inadvertence may be *added*, which are not fit to be asked: by which the Sacrifice becomes either lame and imperfect, or elſe monſtrous and impertinent; *both* which muſt render it unfit to be offered to our Maker.

Then as for *Order* and *Method*, *that* too is to be taken care of in the Publick Devotions. For God Almighty, who hath ſtyl'd himſelf a *God of Order*, hath requir'd that all things in his Service be done decently and in order. Now this, in pious and well-conſider'd *forms*, may be in ſome competent meaſure provided for: as may be ſeen likewiſe in our Excellent *Litur-*

gy; where all the parts and offices of Religion are dispos'd in a comely and orderly Method: as by two Eminent and Learned *Divines* of our Church hath been made fully to appear.

Dr. *Comber* & Dr. *Beveridge.*

Whereas in *extempore, conceiv'd* Prayers, Confusion and Disorder cannot well be avoided; there not being sufficient time to weigh the *Connexion* and *Dependance* of one thing upon another; and so they must be dealt out to the People, not as they are in order to each other, but as they come first to hand.

In a word, it must be utterly impossible that the *Matter* and *Method* of publick Prayers should be so well digested by *sudden* and *unpremeditated* speech, as they may be upon serious and mature *deliberation.*

Sixthly, That Way of Worship which prescribes the Use of the most decent *gestures* and *behaviour* of the *Body* in the Service of God, does best preserve the Reverence and Solemnity of publick Worship: But this is best done by an establish'd *Liturgy*; and therefore *that* must best preserve the Reverence of publick Worship.

That God Almighty expects the Service of the *Body*, as well as that of the

Soul,

Soul, and that the *inward* reverence of the *Mind*, muſt be accompanied with the humble and decent demeanour of the *outward Man*, hath been obſerved and proved *already*.

Now that herein likewiſe a publick *Liturgy* hath vaſtly the Advantage of *conceiv'd* and *extempore* Effuſions, will be obvious to any conſidering perſon: For the *one directs to* and *preſcribes* all the decent Poſtures of Devotion; The *other* leaves Men *looſe*, to all manner of rudeneſs and irreverence in Religious Exerciſes.

Indeed, publick Worſhip being that open and ſolemn *Acknowledgment* we jointly make to our great Creator, ought in reaſon to be perform'd with all *outward* as well as *inward* ſigns and tokens of Honour. For *what* Humility of Body, what Decency of Words and Behaviour, can be *great enough* to be ſhew'd to the *Majeſty* of *Heaven*? Eſpecially when we come to make our ſolemn appearance together before him?

For this reaſon we find in our excellent *Liturgy*, ſuch pious Rules and Orders of external decency, that in the uſe of them we may be enabled to *ſerve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear*.

For in our *Confeſſion* of *Sin*, we are directed to be upon our *Knees*, in token of the low *abaſement* of our ſelves in the ſenſe of them: in our *Confeſſion* of *Faith*, we *ſtand*; in token of our owning and ſteady adhering to it. At the *Name* of *Jeſus*, which is *above every Name*, and at which *all things in Heaven and Earth* are commanded to *bow*, and obey, we reverently *bow* our *Bodies*; in the *Hymns* and *Praiſing* of God, we *lift up* our Selves and our Hearts unto God; which is the proper poſture of Joy. In our *Prayers* we caſt our ſelves *down*, again, on our *Knees*; which is the humble poſture of *Supplicants*, calling for *Mercy*, and begging *Grace to help in time of need:* And thus in *all* the parts and offices of Religion we are directed to thoſe *becoming geſtures*, which are moſt *conſonant* to *Antiquity*, and moſt *expreſſive* of the *Reverence* that is to be ſhew'd in *Divine Worſhip*.

Whereas in thoſe Aſſemblies, where *extempore* Prayers guide the Devotion of the People, little or no regard is had to *bodily* Reverence: for *Sitting* at *Prayers*, when *they* are Speaking *to God*; *Covering* their *head* at *Sermons*, when *God* is Speaking *to them*; with other ſuch *Indecencies*, which would not be allowed in Addreſſes

to our Superiours, are commonly seen among them; *Ever since* the *Cry* against innocent *Ceremonies* was begun and carried on by *cunning* and *designing* Men, they have lost all the *Reverence* and *Decency* of divine Worship, and have brought in great *Disorder*, and *Confusion* in the room of it.

But if these Men would more seriously consider, that God is to be *glorified* by our *Bodies*, as well as *Souls*; and that 'tis not the bare *attendance*, but the humble and good *behaviour* of our Bodies that is expected from us, they might soon learn *better manners* in the presence of their Maker; which nothing can better teach them, than a publick and well-composed *Liturgy*.

Lastly, That which best prevents *Tautologies*, vain *Repetitions*, and all other *Indecencies* in the Service of God, doth best preserve the Reverence of publick Worship: But this is better done by a publick *Form*, than *sudden* Effusions, and therefore *that* must best preserve the Reverence of publick Worship.

That these things are very offensive unto God in our approaches to him, plainly appears by the sharp Rebukes our *Saviour* gave the *Pharisees*, for their

much

much ſpeaking, and *vain repetitions* in *Prayer*.

And that theſe and the like impertinences are incident to ſudden and unpremeditated Speech, hath been before obſerv'd; and the Experience of ſuch as uſe it, can abundantly teſtifie. For how frequent and fulſom are their Invocations of *Lord, Lord*, when they are at a loſs what to ſay? and how uſual is it to ſupply the defects and failures of their Invention, with taking God's Name in vain? And indeed, few can be ignorant with what nauſeous and vain Repetitions, ſuch Prayers do generally abound: Inſomuch, that after a *long extempore* Prayer, there is many times great need of a *ſhort form* to *beg Pardon* for the *rudeneſs* and *irreverence* of ſuch an Addreſs.

Now, what better Expedient can there be to prevent theſe Evils, than an eſtabliſh'd *Liturgy*; where the Tongue is *bound up* from ſuch looſe Excurſions, and kept to a more ſerious and ſolemn Method of Devotion? And therefore we have been told of *one*, who having an *extempore Prayer* taken after him in *Short-Hand*, was after preſented with a *View* of what he had offer'd up to God, and how he had entertain'd the People; the

ſight

ſight whereof fill'd him with that *bluſhing* and *confuſion* at the Impertinences and Tautologies of that exerciſe, that he reſolv'd never more to make ſo bold with God Almighty, and ever after betook him to a compos'd Devotion.

But before I *diſmiſs* this Argument, I ſhall take notice of *two* or *three* great *Inconveniences*, which are known to attend *conceived* Prayers; which can only be cured by preſcribed Forms. As,

1. If he that officiates be a Perſon of *Mean parts*, that is of a *ſlow Invention*, a *bad Memory*, and an *unready Tongue*, the *Religious Exerciſe* muſt neceſſarily *partake* of *his weakneſſes*, and ſo muſt be very *lamely* and *imperfectly* perform'd; which cannot but *diſturb* the *Devotion* both of the Miniſter and People. For if he happen to *heſitate*, or expreſs himſelf in *flat*, or *phantaſtick* Terms, the Hearers, inſtead of minding the *matter*, will be obſerving the *Oddneſs* and *Emptineſs* of his *Expreſſions*: And this will cauſe *ſome* to pity his Weakneſs, *others* to condemn his Impertinence; both which muſt marr the Gravity and Solemnity of the Exerciſe. Yea ſometimes (as one hath obſerv'd) the wretched *dullneſs* of the Performance occaſions *laughter* in the Hearers:

ers: And if it be help'd out with *mimical* Tones and Geſtures, becomes rather a *Scene* of *Mirth* than *Devotion*.

This is a piece of *Irreverence* too well known in *ſome parts* of the Kingdom: Which plainly ſhews, how *unſafe* it is to *leave* the *publick Offices* of *Religion* to the *Weakneſſes* and *Imperfections* of *ſuch* Men. But then,

2. If the Miniſter be one of *better* Parts and Abilities; that is, if his *Invention* be more *quick*, his *Memory ſtrong*, and his *Tongue* more *voluble*, the People then will be apt to be taken up with the *Admiration* of his *Parts*; and inſtead of attending to the *main Duty* of Prayer, will be liſtening to the *Promptneſs* and *Readineſs* of *his Speech*; obſerving the *Method* and *Phraſes*, and pleaſing themſelves with the *Fineneſs* and *Fluency* of his *Expreſſions*. Which things may indeed gratifie the Curioſity of *itching Ears*; but never ſink into the *Heart*: They go no farther than the *Fancy*, and ſerve only to warm and deceive the *Imagination*; whilſt the Soul is no way concern'd in all this, and the Affections are call'd off from all true Devotion.

Now nothing but publick preſcribed *Forms*, in which neither the *Quickneſs* or

Slowneſs

Slowneſs of the *Miniſter's Parts* are to be ſeen, can ſufficiently cure this Evil. For there the People being uſed to the *ſame* Words, ſuited and prepared to the Matter of their Prayers, have nothing to divert their Attention or Affections from them. Then,

Laſtly, Let the Miniſter be a Perſon of never ſo great *Parts*, and *Piety* too, yet he muſt be as all Men are, liable to many *Infirmities* both of Body and Mind; which may prove great Hindrances to the Exerciſe of his Abilities.

He may be ſeiz'd with ſome *Indiſpoſitions* of *Body*, which may diſorder his Thoughts, and marr the Fruitfulneſs of his Invention; and then much crude and indigeſted Matter, many odd and unadviſed Expreſſions may drop from him. He may be ſurpriz'd with Wandrings of Mind, and Failures of Memory, that may put him to a great Loſs both for Matter and Words: which yet muſt be ſupply'd, as they often are, with vain and fulſom Repetitions.

He may be diſturb'd with Paſſion, or encumber'd with worldly Cares and Troubles: Beſides many other ſuch Accidents; which may diſtract his Mind, and occaſion great Confuſion and Irreverence in the Service of God. Now

Now can any considering Person think it fit, that the publick *Devotions* of a *whole Church*, should be left to the Uncertainty of *such Accidents*? Does it not become the Wisdom and Piety of our *Governours* to *provide* against *these Indecencies*? And what *other* Remedy can there be, beside a stated *Liturgy*, or *Forms* of Prayer, to secure the Worship of God from these and many other Inconveniences? Upon the whole then, let any Rational Man judge, whether an establish'd, well-compos'd *Liturgy*, wherein both the *inward* Reverence of the *Mind*, and the *outward* Reverence of the *Body* may be best taken Care of, be not a more *solemn* and *decent* way of publick Worship, than *sudden* and *conceiv'd* Prayer, wherein all things are left to the *Infirmities* and *Indiscretions* both of *Minister* and *People*?

This is what I *affirm'd* in *this place*: And must now leave it to you, impartially to *consider*, whether it be not fully *prov'd*.

And now having *remov'd* the great *Stumbling-block* that lay in your *way* to the *Church*, I must *exhort* you as you tender the *Honour of God*, and your *own Salvation*, diligently and constantly to repair to it.

If

If the Service perform'd there, were only *Lawful*, your *Duty* to *Superiours* in all *lawful* things would *oblige* you to attend it: But having ſhewed it to be the moſt *Expedient*, the moſt *decent* and *devout* way of worſhipping God, I hope you will make it your *choice* and your *delight* too to reſort to it; and ſay with *David*, *One Day in God's houſe is better than a thouſand* other-where. If any of you have *wander'd* from the Fold, and walked in by, and forbidden Paths, 'tis time for you to *return to the Shepherd and Biſhop of your Souls*, and to *confeſs*, in the *Words* of the *Church*, that *you have erred and ſtrayed from God's ways, like loſt ſheep*. And if you have left the *publick Prayers* of *the Church*, for the *private Conceptions of Mens brain*, you have Reaſon to *go on*, and *ſay*, That you *have followed too much the Devices and Deſires of your own Heart*.

Pſal. 84. 10.

Do not then with-draw from theſe Excellent *Prayers* and *Confeſſions*, which are ſo well *ſuited* to all *Wants* and *Neceſſities* of your Soul: But ſet a due price upon this ineſtimable *Treaſury* of *Piety* and *Devotion*; in the Uſe of which, you may be furniſh'd with all *divine Bleſſings*, neceſſary for the *Life that now is, and that which is to come*.

In

In a word, Let me *prevail* with you to *frequent* the *publick Assemblies*, where *God is greatly feared* by a Religious Dread and Awfulness of *Mind*, and *had in Reverence* by the humble and decent Gestures of the *Body*, in drawing nigh to him. And thus, by *joining together* in *one Fellowship* and *Communion here on Earth*, we shall e'er long be received into the ever-blessed *Society* and *Communion* of *Saints in Heaven*.

THE True Moderation DESCRIB'D, And the False Moderation DETECTED.

PHILIPPIANS IV. 5.

Let your Moderation be known unto all Men. The Lord is at hand.

AS there is no Virtue of greater Use and Benefit to Mankind, than that of *Moderation* rightly understood and practis'd; so there is scarce any thing hath a more pernicious Influence both on the publick and private Welfare, than a *wrong Notion of this Virtue*, which has occasion'd great Mistakes,

and lead many into great Enormities.

It may not then be amiss, to describe the true Nature and Effects of *Moderation*, and likewise to detect a false Notion of that Grace, lately started among us, with the bad Use that too many make of it: Both which I shall endeavour to do from these Words of St. *Paul*, *Let your Moderation be known unto all Men. The Lord is at hand.*

The Occasion of the Words was briefly this: St. *Paul* was at this Time a Prisoner at *Rome* for the Truth of the Gospel; And these *Philippians* were at the same time under a heavy Persecution for the Faith of Christ. In this sad Juncture the Apostle sends this Epistle to them, in which he exhorts them to the Exercise of many Christian Graces to support them under their Affliction, and to prepare them for the Coming of the Lord. In the Verse immediately before the Text, he excites them to a Spiritual Joy and Rejoicing in God, saying, *Rejoice in the Lord always*; that is, in *Adversity* as well as *Prosperity*: And because they might think their present afflicted State an unseasonable Time for *Joy*, he repeats it again; *and again I say rejoice*; that is, comfort your selves in the Love and Favour

vour of God, which is great enough to afford a continual Delight in him, in Despight of all *Afflictions*, that may befall you in his Cause. And that you may govern your selves aright under these Trials, he adds the Words of the Text, *Let your Moderation be known unto all Men. The Lord is at hand:* Where we may Observe, First, a Precept, *Let your Moderation be known*, and Secondly, a Motive to enforce it, *The Lord is at hand.* I begin with the Precept, *Let your moderation be known*, &c. For the better Understanding whereof, it may be worth observing, That this Word *Moderation* is no where to be found in the whole *Bible*, save in this One Place, tho' the Original Word that is here render'd by it, occurrs in many other Places, which hath created some Difficulty, and occasion'd diverse Readings of the Words. As,

First, Some read the Words, *Let your Patience be known unto all men*; so the Old Translation, suitable enough to the sad Circumstances of these *Philippians*, who then labour'd under a sore and heavy Persecution, in which the *Apostle* wills them *to bear up with Courage*, and *to make their Patience and Constancy visible to all Men.* Again, *Secondly*,

Secondly, Others read the Words, *Let your Mildneſs and Gentleneſs be known unto all men*, ſuitable to the Original Word ἐπιείκεια, which is often render'd by *Clemency* or *Gentleneſs*. So we read of ἐπιείκεια τοῦ Χριστοῦ of the *Gentleneſs of Chriſt*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 1. And St. *James* makes it one of the Properties of the Heavenly Wiſdom, to be ἐπιεικὴς *gentle*, yielding and ſubmitting to others, eſpecially to Superiours, for the Sake of Peace, *James* 3. 17. And ſo it anſwers to the other Properties, of being *peaceable and eaſy to be entreated*, mention'd in the ſame Verſe. Others again, *Thirdly*, read the words, *Let your Equity or Candor be known unto all Men*, ſo the Word ἐπιείκεια properly ſignifies, which is a *Mitigation of Rigor and ſtrict Juſtice*, when that is not agreeable to the Rules of *Charity*, 'tis oppos'd to Severity in Judging and Puniſhing, and ſignifies the putting the moſt favourable Conſtruction upon all things, and making all the Allowances, that Reaſon and the Nature of things will bear. So the τὸ ἐπιεικὲς in the Text is the ſame with what is meet, decent, and fit to be done, and denotes *that proper Temper of Mind that is to be obſerv'd at all Times*, in doing only what is fit and convenient in all Caſes.

Once

Once more, Others again read the Words, *Let your Meekneſs be known unto all men*, this implies the *moderating* our ſelves under *Sufferings*, or the ſubduing thoſe inordinate Paſſions, that are apt to cauſe Murmurings or Repining under them; this is deſcrib'd by the Meekneſs or Gentleneſs of the *Lamb*, who is dumb before the Shearer, and opens not its mouth under his hand. And this ſeems to be the *Moderation* here mainly intended, which being uſher'd in with a repeated Exhortation, to a Spiritual Rejoycing in the Lord, implies a ſilent and chearful enduring of all Troubles and Trials, that may happen to us in the Cauſe, or for the Sake of Chriſt. All which are to be born with *Equanimity*, or *a conſtant Evenneſs and Calmneſs of Mind*, attended with a chearful Dependence upon God, for a good Event or Iſſue of them.

Now from theſe things well conſider'd, we may gather the true Notion of *Moderation*, which may be thus defin'd:

'Tis a Virtue that conſiſts in regulating the Paſſions, Deſires and Affections of the Soul, both as to the good and the evil things of this Life: Now the Knowledge and Practice hereof being of daily

Use to all *Christians*, I shall briefly explain this Definition in all its Parts.

And *First*, I style it a Virtue, for so it is both moral and theological; as 'tis taught by natural Reason, 'tis a moral Virtue, and so 'tis treated of by the moral Philosophers, as 'tis infus'd by the Spirit of God, 'tis a Divine Grace, and so 'tis treated of by Divines.

Secondly, I style it a *Virtue*, that *consists in regulating the Passions, Desires and Affection of the Soul*; and this it does by the Rules of Reason and Religion. As for Reason, that was first given to us to guide and govern the inferior Powers and Faculties of the Soul, which were all subjected to its Direction and Dominion, and if it be hearken'd to as it should, would go a great way to keep them all in their due Order; the Understanding being set up as the *Candle of the Lord*, or a Light to direct the blind Faculties of the Will and Affections, call'd therefore the τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν, the ruling Powers of the Soul.

But since the Degeneracy and Corruption of human Nature, by the first Transgression, this Order is mightily broken and inverted; for thereby Reason is in a great Measure dethron'd, and often

often master'd by a sensual Appetite; insomuch as the *Apostle* complains, *What we would or should do that we do not*, and *what we would or should not do, that do we. Rom.* 7. And therefore a higher Principle than Reason, even that of Religion, and the Grace of God is now necessary to manage and subdue these unruly Passions and Affections, which are too apt to run into Inordinacy and Excess, and this is done by this Virtue of *Moderation*.

Thirdly, I stile it a *Virtue* that regulates the Desires, *as to the good things of this Life*; and this it does several Ways, As,

First, *Moderation* regulates the Appetite and Desires *in the Use of God's Creatures*, and keeps them within the Bounds and Measures which God and Nature hath set them; not eating to Gluttony, nor drinking to Drunkenness, but avoiding all Excesses of both Kinds, and observing a due Decorum in all the necessary Actions and Refreshments of Human Life. This is an excellent Piece of *Moderation*, and includes in it the Virtues of *Temperance* and *Sobriety*, to be kept to in the whole Course of our Lives.

Again, *Secondly*, *Moderation* regulates the Desires *as to the Wealth and Riches of*

the World, and restrains Men from such an inordinate Love of the World, as is wont to put too many upon sinister and indirect Ways of getting it. St. *Paul* speaks of some, that *will be Rich*, resolving upon it any Way, and stick at no Means, tho' never so sinful, to attain their End: Of whom he farther adds, that *they fall into diverse temptations and snares, that pierce them through with many sorrows.* 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. Now *Moderation* curbs all such exorbitant Desires, and confines Men to such a Portion of worldly Goods, as God in his Providence, by the Use of all Lawful Means, shall think fit for them. This is another Piece of this Virtue, and includes in it, the excellent Graces of *Contentment* and *Heavenly Mindedness.*

Thirdly, *Moderation* regulates the Desires, as to the Honours and Power of the World, and keeps Men from all Ambition and Affectation of Vain-glory, so as not to be pufft up with the empty Air of worldly Applause, or swell with the vain Breath of the Multitude, which is at best as variable and unconstant as the Wind: And yet too many are so greedy of Honour, and feel such an impatient Thirst after Power, that if the Door

leading

leading to Authority opens not of its own Accord, *they will venture to scale the Walls*: Yea, and undermine the Foundation, rather than want an Access to it. Now *Moderation* pricks this Bladder of Pride, and corrects these Swellings and Imposthumations of the Mind, rendring Men more easy and contented in a lower Station: Yea, *it makes them willing to be abased for Christ's Sake*; and to esteem the Reproach of Christ in a good Cause, *greater Riches than the Treasures of* Egypt. Hebr. 11.

This is another excellent Piece of *Moderation*, and contains in it the Virtues of *Humility* and *Self-denial*. Moreover,

Fourthly, *Moderation* regulates the Desires as to the Pleasures and Comforts of this World, and suffers not the Love of them to steal in too far upon the Mind, or to carry us Captive in the soft and pleasing Fetters of Earthly Delights. We read of some *that are Lovers of Pleasure*, 1 Tim 3. 4 *more than Lovers of God*, and prefer the gratifying of their Lusts before the serving and obeying of their Lord.

Now *Moderation* puts a Check upon all such voluptuous Extravagancies, and teaches the right Use of all carnal and sensual Pleasures: It directs to the due Measures and true Ends to be observ'd in the Use

Use of them, by keeping whereunto they will serve rather to refresh, than to oppress or overwhelm the Spirits, and tend more to ease than encrease the Burden of worldly Cares and Troubles. This is another good Piece of *Moderation*, which includes in it the Virtues of *Chastity* and *Mortification*. And these are the principal Acts of this Virtue with Reference to the good Things and Enjoyments of this Life: But besides these there is,

Lastly, Another Part of *Moderation*, which relates to the Evils and Sufferings of this Life, and that teaches how to govern our Passions and Desires with respect to them, which it does by setting Bounds to our Sorrows, and keeping us from Fainting and Impatience under Affliction. And as the good Things of this Life are various, so are the Evils and Troubles of it of diverse Kinds; such as Poverty and Persecution, Infirmities of Body and Mind, Losses and Crosses in Estate, Disgrace and Infamy in Name, Distresses and Disappointments in Affairs, Death, and Departure of Friends and Relations, and the like; all which are apt to depress the Spirits, and to sink them under the Weight and Burden of

their

their Troubles. St. *Paul* speaks of some, that *mourn as men without hope*; and of others that murmur and complain under Afflictions, as if God had dealt too hardly with them, and so give way to immoderate Sorrow and Despair. Now *Moderation* mitigates the Grief and Trouble of these Things, and subdues these irregular Passions, that are apt to ruffle and discompose us; it administers Cordials strong enough to raise and relieve the Spirits, and with the Bitterness of Affliction mingles the Sweets and Comforts that are afforded with them, letting us know, That Afflictions are not so much the signs of God's Displeasure, as the marks of his Love and Favour, for *whom he loveth he chasteneth, and scourges every Son whom he receiveth.* It shews how much they tend to our present Good, and help to promote our future Glory, yielding the peaceable Fruits of Holiness now, which will e'er long ripen and grow up into Happiness; so St. *Paul* assures us, that these *light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for us a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Such Considerations as these will serve to moderate our Sorrows, to lighten the Burden of Afflictions, and to beget an Easiness

1 Thes. 4. 13.

Hebr. 12. 6.

2 Cor. 4. 17.

and

and Evenneſs of Temper, attended with Patience and Reſignation of our ſelves unto God. And

This is the *Moderation* to which the *Apoſtle* here adviſes theſe *Philippians*, whom he would have rather to rejoyce than faint under their Tribulations, and chearfully endure a-while what would ſhortly tend to their greater Glory and Happineſs. Theſe are the principal Acts of *Moderation*, with Reference to the Evils and Sufferings of this Life, and ſhew us the Nature and true Notion of this Virtue, which is not ſo much a ſingle Grace, as a Complication and Conſtellation of Virtues, all which direct us how to demean our ſelves, both in Proſperity and Adverſity.

Now this *Moderation* the *Apoſtle* would have to be made known unto all Men; *Let your Moderation be known unto all men.* He would not have them reſt in the inward Eaſe and Satisfaction they felt in their own Breaſts, but to manifeſt it by their outward Actions, and to make it viſible and apparent to others, and that partly for their Conviction, and partly for their Imitation. For the Firſt,

Such Examples of Patience and Conſtancy in Sufferings, will demonſtrate the

Truth

Truth and Reality of Religion, and convince the World of the Force and Efficacy of Christianity; 'twill make others to glorify God in the Day of Visitation, and report, that God is in us of a Truth: 'Twas this that so mightily promoted *the Success and Propagation of the Gospel*, which spread more and farther under the black Clouds of *Persecution*, than under the Sunshine of *Prosperity*: For when the Enemies of Christ saw the Courage and Constancy of his *Disciples* under the sharpest Trials, and found them enduring the greatest Sufferings, with the most undaunted *Patience and Magnanimity*, they concluded 'em to be supported by a more than Ordinary Power, and that nothing less than Divine Grace could bear them up, or carry them thro' them. This brought in many *Converts and Proselytes* to Christianity, and caus'd many to embrace that Faith, *which they before persecuted.*

Neither can any thing more recommend our *Profession*, than this *Calmness* and *Equality* of Mind under Troubles.

And as the Apostles willing this *Moderation* to be known unto all Men, was for the Conviction of some, so it was for the Imitation of others; that they might learn

learn to demean themselves in like manner under all their Afflictions. And, indeed, such Examples have sometimes a good Influence, and strongly provoke to Emulation; they help to inspire Men with a Courage suitable to their Cause, and shew the hardest Duties to be both practicable and pleasant.

Because *Examples draw stronger than Precepts*, St. *Paul* would have this *Moderation visible to all men*, the better to advance the Honour of God, the Credit of Religion, and the Good of others, who may be thereby taught *to go and do likewise*.

And to this, we are powerfully excited by a strong Motive and Encouragement in the last Words of the Text, *The Lord is at hand*; meaning, that he is at hand, 1*st*, To assist and relieve us in Trouble. 2*dly*, To behold our Carriage and Behaviour under it. 3*dly*, He is at hand to put an End to all our Trials and Afflictions. And *Lastly*, His coming is at hand to judge and render to every one according to his Works.

First, I say, *the Lord is at hand to assist and relieve us in Time of Trouble*; He that is always near or present with us, is said to be at hand; hence the Psalmist tells us,

us, That *God is nigh unto all them that call upon him*; and elsewhere, That *he is a present Help in the needful Time of Trouble*. If he strikes with one Hand, he is ready to support with the other; yea, the same Hand oft'times wounds and works the Cure: So the Apostle tells us, that his Grace is ever ready and sufficient for us; and therefore we need not to despond, or be dismay'd in Affliction, but to keep up an Evenness of Spirit, and in the Use of good Means to depend and rely upon Divine Providence.

Secondly, The Lord is at hand, to observe our Carriage and Behaviour under such Trials: His Eye is continually upon us, as well to observe our Ways, as to relieve our Wants; he sees whether we will rely upon his help in the Ways of his own Appointment, or have recourse to wrong and forbidden Methods to help ourselves: Hence the Psalmist minds us, That *God is at our right-hand, that we should not be moved to do evil.* And St. *Paul*'s minding us here, that *the Lord is at hand*, may be to teach us to govern our Selves and all our Actions, with that Decency and Discretion, as becometh those that are always sensible of his great and gracious Presence.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The Lord is at hand, to put an End to our Troubles and Afflictions in his due Time: And this is a good Argument to encourage us Patiently to bear all unjuſt and unavoidable Sufferings, becauſe the Lord is at hand to reward our Patience, and to put an End to the farther Exerciſes of it, and therefore we ſhould demean our ſelves with all *Equanimity* and *Moderation of Temper*, even to the immediate Cauſes and Inſtruments of our Sufferings, becauſe God is ready to relieve us at preſent, and will ſhortly rid us out of all. So *David* found by Experience, That *many are the Troubles of the Righteous, but God delivers them out of all.* And this leads to the

Laſt, and perhaps the trueſt Senſe of theſe Words, *The Coming of the Lord is at hand, when he will Judge the World, and render to every one according to his Works:* And then the Force of the Argument will ly in that juſt and ſpeedy Retribution that will be made to all good Men, who ſhall be rewarded as well for the Evil they have ſuffer'd, as for the Good they have done, and therefore they need not complain too much of Injuries and hard Uſage, nor be too rigorous to right or revenge themſelves preſently, when there

there is one coming that will surely do all Men Right, neither need we to faint under those Afflictions, that only lead by a Cross to receive a Crown.

Thus we see the Nature and right Notion of *Moderation*, which I have shewn to be a Virtue that consists in the Regulating of the Passions, Desires, and Affections of the Soul, both as to the good and evil Things of this Life; a Virtue that implies such a Victory over a Man's Self, as serves to keep him in a due Frame and Disposition of Mind at all Times and in all Conditions, and is of infinite Use and Benefit through all the Stages of Human Life.

From whence I proceed in the next Place, To consider a new and false Notion of *Moderation* lately started and propagated among us, to serve some sinister and secular Designs; and that is, to Stile a Want of Zeal for Religion, or a Coldness and Indifference in the Matters of the Church, by the Name of *Moderation*: A Notion that hath taken its Rise from our unhappy Dissensions and Divisions, and the many Sects that have risen up and grown by them, the Favouring of which, tho' a manifest Breach of Unity and Order in the Church, is yet call'd

and countenanc'd by the Name of *Moderation*; hence they that abate of their Conformity to the Church, and omit any of the decent Rites or Ceremonies enjoin'd for the Uniformity of publick Worship, such are styl'd and commended for *Moderate Men*, tho' 'tis indeed no better than prevaricating with God and his Church, and violating the Promises and Subscriptions made to it: Again, They that comply too far with *Dissenters*, by encouraging their Divisions, and putting a helping Hand to support and continue them, they are reckon'd in the Number of *moderate Men*; tho' this be but a hardning them in their Schism, a betraying the Church, of which they are Members: And laying it open to the Assaults and Designs of its greatest Enemies. Once more, they that Halt between two Opinions, and Trim between the *Church* and the *Conventicle*, going sometimes to the One, and sometimes to the Other; they likewise pass for *moderate Men*, tho' they are neither True or Steddy to either, but falsify and divide from Both. And yet, this *Lukewarmness* and *Neutrality* in Religion, is frequently shelter'd under the specious Name and Notion of *Moderation*.

But this kind of *Moderation* hath not the

the least Countenance from the Holy Scriptures, either of the Old or New Testament; but rather stands condemn'd and censur'd in both. In the Old Testament 'tis blam'd as *a Halting between two Opinions, or a serving of God and Baal*, 1 Kin. 18. 21. In the Medley of Religions among the *Samaritans*, 'tis reprov'd as *a fearing the Lord and serving of other Gods*: which brought many heavy Judgments upon them, as we read, 2 Kin. 17. In the New Testament 'tis condemn'd by our Saviour, as *a serving of two Masters, God and Mammon*, which *no Man* can safely or faithfully doe. *Matth.* 6. 24. In the Epistles of the Apostles we read of some judaizing Christians, who made a Mixture of Judaism and Christianity; as also of a Sect known by the Name of *Gnosticks*, who blended Heathenism and Christianity together; but both were strenuously oppos'd and argued against by the Apostles in several of their Epistles. St. *James* calls these Moderate Men by the Name of *Double-minded Men*, and pronounces of them that *they are unstable in all their Ways*, Jam. 5. 1. In the Book of the *Revelations*, this *Moderation* is rebuk'd in the Church of *Laodicea* for *Lukewarmness* and *Hypocrisy*, and such *moderate Men*,

as were *neither Hot nor Cold but Luke-warm* were threaten'd by God to be *Spued out of his Mouth*, Rev. 3. 15, 16. Not that theſe Men are to be rank'd with Idolaters, Jews or Heathens, but that they too far reſemble them in ſuch a corrupt and inſincere Way of Worſhip.

Now the Falſhood of this Notion will eaſily appear, by conſidering, that Moderation hath no reſpect to our Duty unto God, for we cannot be too devout or religious towards him; there is no mean to be obſerv'd here, for the ſtronger our Affections are carried out after him the better it is. But Moderation relates wholly to the Matters of this World, in the Love or Hatred, whereof Men are but too apt to exceed: Our Paſſions and Deſires towards Earthly Objects may be, and often are inordinate and extravagant, and therefore we are required to moderate them by the Rules of Reaſon and Religion; but our Duty to God admits of no Exceſs, we cannot Love, Deſire or Serve Him too much, and to be *Moderate* here is to be Lukewarm and Hypocritical.

And yet all that is alledg'd for this falſe Notion, is uſually taken from theſe Words of our Text, *Let your Moderation*

be known unto all Men, where *Moderation* denotes a due Demeanor of our ſelves both in Proſperity and Adverſity, not abuſing the good Things of this Life by any Exceſs; nor ſinking under the Evils and Troubles of it, by any Impatience, but keeping up a conſtant Calmneſs and Evenneſs of Mind under both. This is the true Senſe and Meaning of the *Moderation* here mention'd and recommended to us, which you ſee hath no Relation to ſuch a Coldneſs and Indifference in Religion, as ſome would have it; but rather the quite contrary: For it calls for ſuch a Zeal and Warmth of Love towards God as may *Moderate* our Love to all Earthly Comforts, and lighten the Burden of all Worldly Sorrows. And indeed, ſuch *a Moderation is fit to be made known unto all Men*, both for their Example and Encouragement: Whereas, ſuch a Coldneſs and Neutrality in Religion, is ſo far from being Worthy the Knowledge or Imitation of any, that it deſerves to be deteſted, where-ever it is diſcover'd. Beſide,

It had been a ſtrange Piece of Advice to theſe *Philippians* under Perſecution, to Exhort them to be *Moderate* and *Lukewarm* in their Duty, at a Time when the

greatest *Zeal* and *Fervency of Spirit* was required of them. Neither could it be any great Encouragement to such double Minded Men to be told, That *the Lord is at hand*, who will be sure to Publish and Punish such *Hypocrisy*. And

Thus having describ'd the True, and detected the False *Notion of Moderation*, all the Use I shall make of it, will be to Exhort to the one, and to Disswade from the other. And,

First, From this Discourse, let us learn and practise the *true Virtue of Moderation*, as 'tis here describ'd to us; which will be of Excellent Use both to our selves, and others with whom we have to do; for this will teach us to govern our Passions aright, and to keep our *Love*, *Joy*, *Desire*, and *Grief* within their due Bounds, setting them upon their right Objects, and confining them to their due Measures, which will be a good Guide to that which is Good, and a great Preservative from all Evil. If this Virtue, or Stay of the Soul, be wanting, our Love will become inordinate, our Desires irregular, our Joys extravagant, our Sorrows immoderate, all which must occasion great Uneasiness and Trouble. Again,

This

This Virtue will curb the Exorbitances of our Sensual Appetite, and subject the Flesh to the Spirit, and thereby restore the Liberty of the Soul from the Tyranny and Usurpation of imperious Lusts: 'Twill keep a due Decorum in Diet, Apparel, and Recreations, and restrain all Inordinacy, Immodesty, and Indecency in each. Where the Reins are let loose, Men run into all Excess of Riot, *into Surfeitings and Drunkenness, into Chambering and Wantonness, into Strife and Envying*, with many other pernicious Vices, that hurt both Body and Soul: Whereas this Virtue of *Moderation*, by regulating the Passions, and subduing all vile Affections, will in a great Measure prevent the Evil, and promote the Good of both; for 'twill bring Health and Ease to the Body, Peace and Tranquility to the Soul, and in a Word, 'will carry us with Comfort through all the Parts and Passages of this present Life, and lead us to endless Joy and Felicity in the next. Wherefore above all things, let us Labour and Pray, and Strive for this Excellent Grace, and let our *Moderation be visible to all Men*, that they by our Example may learn Temperance, Sobriety, and Chastity, under the Affluence and

Plenty of Proſperity, and likewiſe behave themſelves with Patience, Submiſſion, and Equanimity under the Frowns and Straits of Adverſity: which are the principal Acts and Properties of this Virtue.

To perſwade you hereunto, know 'tis the Nobleſt Victory to Conquer our Paſſions; for *greater is he* (ſaith Solomon) *that governs himſelf, than he that conquers a City*. To gain this Maſtery, we muſt (as the Apoſtle directs) be Temperate in all Things, and bound our Deſires by the Rules of *Modeſty* and *Moderation*: So ſhall we bring Glory to God, Renown to our Profeſſion, and a Reward to our Selves, To which Ends, let us in the

Laſt Place, Beware of miſtaking a Coldneſs and Indifference in Religion for the Virtue of *Moderation*, nor think the better of ſuch a Neutrality for wearing about ſo ſpecious a Title; there is ſcarce any Thing that hath more impos'd upon Mankind, than putting of bad Names upon good Things, and good Names upon bad Things; both which have done unſpeakable Miſchief. Thus a firm Adherence to the Church is termed *Biggotry, Popery, and Superſtition*, and the like, while *Schiſm and Separation* are Chriſtened *Zeal, and the Power of Godlineſs*. *Rebellion* oft-

times

times wears the Colours of *Reformation*, and here *Lukewarmneſs* paſſeth for *Moderation*. Thus many are deterred from Virtue, and deluded into Vice by the Charms and Witchcraft of wrong Names; this is in the Prophet's Phraſe, *to call evil good, and good evil, to put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs, ſweet for bitter, and bitter for ſweet; againſt all which a Woe is denounced*, Iſa. 5. 20. Let us therefore take heed of being Abuſed or Miſled by this Artifice, eſpecially in the Caſe before us: To moderate our Deſires and Affections to Worldly Things, and to order our ſelves aright both in a proſperous and adverſe Condition, is a wiſe and uſeful *Piece of Moderation*; but to make a *Careleſneſs* and *Unconcernedneſs* in the *Matters of the Church* to paſs for *Moderation*, is a groſs Abuſe of the Word, and of all that are miſled by it; to halt between the *Church* and the *Conventicle*, is to be half a *Conformiſt* and half a *Diſſenter*, which is to be much like *Agrippa*, half a *Chriſtian* and half otherwiſe. In ſhort, it is to be neither *Hot nor Cold*, which was ſeverely threatened in the *Church of Laodicea*, and will not fare any better in ours. Rev. 3. 15.

If then we have any *True Love* to *God*

or

or his *Church*, let us be zealous and warmly affected towards both, for Love is a warm Passion, and where 'tis in good Earneſt fixt on any thing, it will be accompanied with a Heat and Fervency of Spirit; and the Apoſtle tells us, *It is good to*
Gal. 4. 18 *be thus zealouſly affected always in a good thing.* He that can ſee the Church of Chriſt rent by *Schiſm*, or behold the Bowels of their Mother torn out without any Concern, muſt ſure have either none, or but a very cold Affection for her. The true
1 Kin. 3. 27 Mother would not have the Child divided, *nor would our true Mother the Church have her Sons and Children divided among themſelves, or the Members of her Body torn and rent from one another*; to look on this without Reſentment, and like *Gallio*, to care for none of theſe things, diſcovers an evil Heart of Unbelief, and *a departing from the living God.*

Wherefore let us not colour or cover over this *Indifferency* with the *Mask of Moderation*, but call it by its own Name, *Lukewarmneſs and Hypocriſy*; and let us learn henceforth, to be *more Steddy and Sincere to the Church of which we profeſs our ſelves Members. How long halt ye* (ſaid the Prophet *Elijah* to the People of *Iſrael*) *between two Opinions*; *If the Lord be God,*

ſerve

serve him, if Baal follow him, 1 Kings 18. 21. If the Church of which we are Members, be well Established in its *Doctrine, Discipline, and Communion,* and I am sure no Part of the *Christian World* can shew a better, why should we break its *Peace and Unity* by *Schism,* or betray it by *Division,* or suffer it to be undermined by *Hollowness and Hypocrisy?* The Prophets Question so convinced and confounded the *Israelites,* that 'tis said, *they answered him not a word.* And indeed, such *Wavering and Falshood in Religion,* is enough to beget Silence and Confusion of Face in all that practise it.

To conclude all, Let me Exhort all such, as the Angel did in the *Church of Sardis,* those who had a Name to live but were dead, *to be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain and were ready to die; for I have not found thy Works perfect before God; Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent.* Which God grant for the sake of *Jesus Christ,* &c. Revel. 3. 1

THE

THE *Danger of* Diviſions, Together with the *Benefit of* Unanimity.

2 COR. XIII. 11.

---*Finally, brethren, be of one Mind, live in Peace, and the God of Love and Peace ſhall be with you.*

THESE words are St. *Paul*'s laſt Advice to the *Corinthians*, upon his leaving of them; which, like the words of departing friends, are of great weight, and apt to leave a laſting Impreſſion behind them. He had ſpent ſome time with good ſucceſs in planting the Goſpel among them, where yet the Tares of Errors and Hereſies unhappily ſprung up, which made him labour with

with more than ordinary Pains to ſuppreſs or root them up. In this Chapter he ſhakes the Rod over ſome obſtinate Offenders, and threatens without amendment, to exerciſe upon them the Power of an Apoſtle, *ver.* 2. 10. After this, he prepares them for his departure; and having left *Apollos, a Man mighty in the Scriptures*, to water his Plantation, and to finiſh the Work he had begun among them, commits them unto God, who was alone able to give the Increaſe, and takes his leave of them in this ſolemn Addreſs: *Finally, brethren, Farewel; be of good Comfort, be of one Mind, live in Peace, and the God of Love and Peace ſhall be with you.* In which Words he recommends the two great Leſſons of Unanimity and Peace.

The one reſpects the Church, in which he wills them to *be all of one Mind:* The other the State, in which he exhorts them *to live in Peace.* Both which he enforces with a promiſe of the Divine Bleſſing and Preſence, in theſe words, *and the God of Love and Peace ſhall be with you.* In treating whereof, I begin firſt with the great Duty of Unanimity, which chiefly reſpects the Church, in which the Apoſtle would have all the Members

of

of it *to be of one Mind*, that is, to be of the ſame Judgment and Opinion in the great and weighty Matters of Religion, to think and ſpeak the ſame Things, and to agree together in the Worſhip and Service of our Maker. Indeed, as for the common and ordinary Affairs of Human Life, we are allowed to have different Sentiments about them, being left in a great Meaſure to our own Choice, and depending very much upon the various and mutable circumſtances of Human Actions, in which yet we are to hearken to the Counſel of the Wiſer, and acquieſce in the Sentence of the Better part: But in the more important matters of Religion, ſuch as the Worſhip of God, the Doctrine, Diſcipline and Communion of the Church, wherein the publick Peace, as well as our own private Welfare, are ſo much concern'd, here we are required to agree and ſpeak the ſame thing; for theſe being preſcrib'd by Divine Authority, for the Order and good Government of the Church of Chriſt, we are quietly to reſt in them, and therein to be like-minded. This is what our Text exhorts to, in willing Chriſtians *to be of one mind.*

But becauſe ſome, who love or live by Diviſions,

Diviſions, would have it thought impoſſible, or at leaſt unneceſſary, that all Men ſhould be of one mind, and therefore for ſiniſter and ſecular ends ſeek to perſwade and encourage too many to be otherwiſe, I muſt endeavour to convince theſe Sons of Diſcord,

First, *That 'tis poſſible for all Chriſtians to be of one mind in the great and weighty Affairs of Religion.*

Secondly, *That 'tis neceſſary for all good Chriſtians to be ſo.*

Thirdly, *I muſt preſs this neceſſary and important Duty upon all good Subjects, eſpecially at this Juncture;* And

Laſtly, *Preſcribe ſome Directions for the better attaining to it.*

First, then, I muſt prove that 'tis poſſible for Chriſtians to *be of one mind*, in the great Affairs of the Church. This one would think ſhould be a ſtrange and needleſs Task; and indeed ſo it would be, if the craft and ſubtilty of Deceivers had not made it neceſſary: But becauſe ſome, to countenance Diviſions, and promote their own ends by them, have made

made many weak and ignorant People to think otherwiſe, 'twill be requiſite to remove their miſtake about it, and to prove the Apoſtle's Exhortation to be both Poſſible and Practicable; which I ſhall do,

1. From the Example of the firſt Chriſtians, who were all of one Heart and one Mind.

2. From the Apoſtle's ſharp reprehending all Perſons and Places where he found it otherwiſe.

3. From the ſtrict Cautions againſt Diviſions, and the many earneſt Exhortations to Unity; all which will plainly evince the poſſibility of this Duty.

For the Example of the firſt Chriſtians, nothing is more evident in Sacred Writ than their great Concord and Unanimity; for we are expreſly told, that they were *of one Heart and one Soul*, Acts iv. 32. Of the Apoſtles and firſt Diſciples we read, that *they were continually together in the Temple, bleſſing and praiſing God.* Luk. xxiv. 53. That *they met together in one place, with one accord and one mind*, Acts ii. 1. That *they continued ſtedfaſt in the Apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip in breaking of bread and in prayer*, Acts ii. 42. That *they were daily with one accord in the Temple, breaking*

breaking bread from house to house, and eating their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Acts ii. 46. By which means *there were daily added to the Church such as should be saved*, ver. 47.

These, and many other places that might be cited to the same purpose, plainly shew that blessed Harmony and Concord that was found among them in matters of Religion and the Worship of God, all of them joining together *with one mind and one mouth to glorifie their great Creator.*

And this was followed with such an entire and hearty love to the Brethren, that the World was amaz'd at the astonishing Acts and Offices of Kindness that passed between them, insomuch that it became Proverbial to say, *Behold, how the Christians love one another!* This is recorded to the Honour of the Primitive Christians, and conduc'd mightily to the increase and propagation of Christianity.

Now this excellent Example shews Unity to be no impossible or impracticable thing; for what hath been, may be again; and if we will follow the steps of these first and best Christians, they will lead us only into the ways of Truth and Peace; the Pattern is set for our imitation, shewing that by doing as they did,

we may be like them, of one heart and one mind, and that 'tis only owing to Mens Vices and corrupt Deſigns where 'tis otherwiſe.

2. To convince us of the poſſibility of this Duty, we find the Apoſtles blaming Diviſions in all places where they came, and ſharply rebuking the Authors and Abettors of them; which would be to no purpoſe, if Unity were impoſſible, or Diviſions unavoidable. The firſt great Controverſies that aroſe in the Chriſtian Church were about Circumciſing the Gentile-Converts, and continuing the Rites of *Moſes*'s Law; both which being decided by the Meeting of the Apoſtles and others in the great Council at *Jeruſalem*, of which we read *Acts* xv. all Chriſtians were commanded to agree and acquieſce in them; and not only ſo, but to *mark all thoſe that caus'd Diviſions contrary to their Doctrine, and avoid them*; which by the way ſhews this to be the beſt Expedient and Inſtrument of Peace in all doubtful and diſputable Caſes, and is therefore fitly to be uſed and ſubmitted to in all Chriſtian Churches.

But the moſt and greateſt Diviſions we read of were in this Church of *Corinth*, where the people ran into divers Parties

and

and Factions, one crying up one Teacher, and another another; *One saying, I am of* Paul; *another, I am of* Apollos; *a third, I am of* Cephas; which occasioned much strife and envying among them. Of this kind are the unhappy Divisions of our Days, in which Men run into divers Sects and Parties, each of them *heaping to themselves Teachers, having itching ears,* to the great distraction of Mens minds, and exasperating them one against another. Against these therefore the Apostle sets himself with a more than ordinary Zeal and Indignation. As for the more ignorant and deluded part of them, he *beseeches them by the Name of Christ,* by which they were called, *that they would all speak the same thing, that there may be no divisions among them, but be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment,* 1 Cor. i. 10. As for the designing Party among them, he severely checks and exposes their corrupt aims, letting them know, that whilst they cherish'd and countenanc'd these Divisions, they were *carnal, and walk'd as men*; meaning, that whatever pretences they might make of greater Purity, or better means of Edification, to draw others after them,

they were ſo far from being better, that they were indeed the worſt of Men; their Schiſms were not marks of Grace, or the fruits of God's Holy Spirit, but ſigns of Carnality, and the ſad ſymptoms of Apoſtacy from the Faith and Truth of Chriſtianity.

Now would the Apoſtle, think you, ſo bittterly inveigh againſt Diviſions, if they were ſuch innocent and expedient things, as ſome pretend? Or would he ſo ſeverely condemn the Authors and Abettors of them, if they were not to be prevented or avoided? No certainly; thoſe ſharp Rebukes manifeſtly ſhew the evil and danger of them, and that we ſhould abhor and put a ſtop to them, by joining together in the ſame mind and the ſame judgment.

3. The poſſibility of this Unity may yet farther appear from the many and repeated Exhortations to it in holy Scripture; there is ſcarce any one thing more frequently or more earneſtly preſſed and inculcated upon us, than this Doctrine of Peace and Unity; 'twas one of the firſt things proclaimed at our Saviour's coming into the World, and the laſt thing he left in charge with his followers at his going out of it.

His laſt Legacy to them was Peace, and his laſt Prayer for them was Unity, *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art one in me, and I in thee; ſo they alſo may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou haſt ſent me*, John xvii. 21, 22. Where that perfect harmony of Mind and Affection, that is between Chriſt and his Father, is made the Pattern or Platform of that Unity that is to be found among Chriſtians, *That they all may be one* (ſays he) *even as we are one.*

And this Prayer of his was not only for his Diſciples, that were then alive and about him, but for all thoſe that ſhould after believe in his Name, that all who would be thought his Followers, and embrace his Doctrine, might agree together in this Unity and godly Love, which he there intimates would prove the beſt demonſtration of his Meſſiahſhip; for the World would ſooner believe that God had ſent him, if his Diſciples agree together, than if they claſh and fall into different Sects and Opinions.

Indeed 'tis the great lack of this Union, that makes ſo many to doubt and diſbelieve our Saviour; for when they behold the Religion of the Meſſias, which ſhould above all things unite and endear

his followers to each other, create little else than feuds and dissentions, they are thereby induc'd to reject both the Author and his Religion too. And therefore when false Teachers began to sow these Seeds of Discord and Division in the Christian Church, we find the Apostles earnestly cautioning all good Christians against them, as the Enemies of Christ, and the Betrayers of Christianity. St. *Paul*, to defeat the designs of such Seducers, heaps up more Arguments for this Oneness of mind, than for any one thing else in all his Epistles.

In his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, he minds them, That there is but *One Body*, that is, one Christian Church;

That there is but *One Spirit*, to actuate and enliven this Body;

That there is but *One Calling*, even our Christian Profession; And likewise *One Hope of this Calling*, even the Salvation of our Souls;

That there is but *One Lord*, to govern and preside over this Church;

That there is but *One Faith* or Doctrine taught and professed in it;

That there is but *One Baptism*, that leads and enters into it;

And *lastly*, That there is but *One God*

and

and Father of all, to bleſs, ſupport and reward all the Members of it: And by theſe things, and all that is Sacred, conjures them to *keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, Epheſ. iv. 2, 3, 4. And being thus ty'd together by all the Sacred Bands of Peace and Unity, ſure it can be no part of true Religion to ſeparate and divide from one another.

But beſide all theſe Arguments, to work upon the Judgment, he doth in his Epiſtle to the *Philippians* make mention of all the endearments of Chriſtianity and Kindneſs to work upon the Affections; *If there be any conſolation in Chriſt*, (ſaith he) *if any comfort of Love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any bowels of Mercy, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, being of one accord, and of one mind.* Phil. ii. 1, 2.

Now, if it be impoſſible for Chriſtians to be all of one mind, to what purpoſe are all theſe earneſt Exhortations to it? Did Chriſt pray, and his Apoſtles preſs us to a thing that cannot be attain'd? and have both, in calling us to Unity, put us upon an impoſſible or impracticable Task? No certainly, 'tis not that we cannot be all of one mind, but becauſe too many have no mind to have it ſo. There is a certain Pride and Pleaſure

in Oppoſition; ſome delight to be the Heads of Parties, and others are eaſily and ignorantly drawn into them: beſides, ſomething may be gotten in troubled Waters, that may not be had when they are calm and ſtill; 'tis not that Unity is impoſſible, but that Diviſions may be ſometimes more profitable, that makes ſome Men to hate the one, and to love the other. All which things plainly ſhew Unanimity to be poſſible; and if there be any difficulty in it, we ſee whence it comes, *viz.* not from the Nature of the Thing, but from the Corruption of Mens Natures and Deſigns: And therefore I muſt proceed to ſhew,

Secondly, That 'tis not only poſſible to be of one mind in the great Affairs of the Church, but that 'tis a neceſſary Duty for all good Men to be ſo; and this is ſo evident from the Scriptures and Arguments already alledg'd, that there can be no need of adding more to ſatisfie any well-meaning perſons about it. That which is requiſite to be done under this Head, will be to ſhew the weakneſs of thoſe Pleas and Pretences by which the Enemies of Peace cool Mens Deſires and Endeavours after Unity, and make them warm and eager in promoting their ſeveral

veral Sects and Parties; To which end they tell them,

1. That it is no more neceſſary for all Men to be of one Mind, than it is to be of one Stature and Complexion; That they may be allow'd as well a diverſity of Opinions as of Faces; That the Beauty and Ornament of the World conſiſts in One as well as the Other; That to reſtrain their Judgments, is no wiſer an Attempt, than to go about to rectifie their Countenances; and to perſwade all Men to be of the ſame Mind, is all one with ſtretching them to the ſame length or ſtature of Body.

This is often ſaid by the Wiſeſt of them; and carrying ſome ſhew of Argument, hath drawn and encourag'd many ignorant Perſons in the ways of Separation: And yet this, if well conſider'd, is no better than a groſs and apparent Fallacy. For,

1*ſt*, 'Tis not in our Power to be of what Stature and Complexion we pleaſe; theſe things are entirely in God's hands, who, like the Potter, molds the Clay into what Form and Figure he thinks fit, making one a Veſſel of Honour, and another of Diſhonour. It would be a great Folly and Preſumption in any, to go about to alter

alter the Frame and Make of his Body, and, with ſome Face-menders, to correct the Workmanſhip of God's hands: whereas God hath put it in our Power to to be like-minded, and directed us how and wherein we are to agree and join together; he hath given us Reaſon to rectifie our Underſtanding, and correct the Errors of our Judgment, and hath added thereunto the Revelation of all Divine and neceſſary Truths; ſo that by a due Uſe of theſe means, we may be all of one Mind, though we cannot be of one Meaſure and Stature of Body. Again,

2dly. As this is not in our power, ſo neither is it under any Command: We are not requir'd to be all ſtretch'd to the ſame Length, or to have all the ſame Face and Complexion, but we are frequently call'd upon *to be all of one Mind*, and *to join together in the ſame Judgment*: So that to argue from the one to the other, is a manifeſt Inconſequence.

Beſides, *3dly.* The Variety of Creatures and Complexions are the Beauty, Ornament, and Perfection of the World; and the different Faces of Mankind, like the different Herbs and Flowers of the Field, adorn the Face of the Earth: whereas

whereas different Sects and Opinions in Religion are the Diſgrace and Scandal of Chriſtianity; they deſtroy the Beauty of Holineſs, they bring Deformity into Divine Worſhip, and breed nothing but Diſorder and Confuſion in the World. So that Mens different Faces can give no countenance to their different Opinions. And therefore this, if rightly underſtood, will ſcarce carry the face of an Objection. Moreover,

2. The Sons of Craft, to uphold and increaſe their Sects, farther tell the People, That 'tis no more neceſſary to be all of one Mind, than 'tis to be all of one Calling, Trade, or Profeſſion: And as men may live peaceably and uſefully in the World by following their ſeveral Trades and Profeſſions, ſo may they do the ſame by following their ſeveral Opinions. Do not the Lawyer, (ſay they) Phyſician, and all ſorts of Mechanicks, uſe their own Judgments in their particular Profeſſions? and why may not *Presbyterians*, *Quakers* and *Anabaptiſts* as well follow their own Opinions in Religion, while they keep to the great Duties of Subjection and Charity?

This is another Artifice to deſtroy Unity, and promote Diviſions, which an ordi-

ordinary Observer may easily discern to be a plain Fallacy. For,

Though there be different Callings in the World, in which Men may and ought variously to employ themselves; yet there is but one Calling as Christians, in which they ought all to agree, and go hand in hand together: For so the Apostle, to obviate this Objection, expresly tells us, That we are *all called into one Calling*, and likewise into *one Hope of this Calling*, Eph. iv. 4. meaning, that the Christian Profession is one and the same to all, having the same Rule of Faith and Manners; and therefore we are all to walk in it the same way, that we may come at last to the same end. Hence we find the Apostle speaking of *the Vocation wherewith we are called*, in the Singular Number, as being but One; willing all Christians to *walk worthy of it, in all lowliness and meekness, forbearing one another in love*; not separating and dividing from each other, to beget hatred, but *endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* Indeed divers Trades and Callings are necessary to answer the divers Wants, and employ the divers Abilities of Mankind, for the Publick Good; but the way of Christianity

is

is but one, all Chriſtians having the ſame Warfare to accompliſh, and the ſame Race to run, in order to the obtaining the ſame *Prize of our high Calling in Chriſt Jeſus.* So that our different Callings as Men, can give no encouragement to different Callings as Chriſtians, nor juſtifie different Sects and Opinions in Religion. Again,

3. The Enemies of Peace farther tell us, That the Diviſions we complain of are no new things, but ſuch as have ever been in the Church; yea, St. *Paul* makes them in a manner neceſſary, ſaying *there muſt be Hereſies, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt*, 1 Cor. xi. 19. This is another Maſque, by which they ſeek to palliate and hide from the People the deformity of theſe Evils; and therefore, to remove it, know,

Firſt, That to argue from Matters of Fact to Right, is bad Reaſoning: For many things have been, and ſtill are, which ought not to be; and if Practice and Preſcription of Time were a good Plea, it might help to juſtifie the vileſt Enormities, moſt of which having been ever ſince the World began.

Secondly, 'Tis both our Duty and our Wiſdom

Wiſdom rather to follow good Precedents than bad. There was a time when Diſſentions were unknown, and Unity was found among Chriſtians: *Jeruſalem*, which in Scripture is ſet to ſignifie the whole Church, is deſcrib'd to be a City compact together, and all its Members at Unity among themſelves, for which reaſon 'tis ſtyl'd *the Joy of the great King*, and *the Praiſe of the whole Earth*: And the Unity of the Primitive Chriſtians both in Judgment and Affection is celebrated throughout the World, being all of one Heart and one Mind. Now, is it not much better to imitate theſe good Examples, than to *follow a multitude to do evil?*

Thirdly, The Apoſtle's ſaying, *There muſt be Hereſies*, implies no Approbation of them, as if they were harmleſs or deſirable things, but ſhews the Corruption of Mens Natures and Deſigns that lead too many into them: The expreſſion is much like that of our Saviour's, *It muſt needs be that Offences come*; which ſeeming Neceſſity proceeds not from the Nature or Goodneſs of the Things, but from the Badneſs of Men, who are but too apt both to give and to take them; and therefore 'tis immediately added,

Wo

Wo be to them by whom the Offence cometh, Matth. xviii. 7.

3. The Reaſon added by the Apoſtle why *there muſt be Hereſies*, viz. *That they who are approved may be made manifeſt*, ſhews theſe to be the Teſt or Trial of the Truth of our Profeſſion; and that is not by embracing, but avoiding of them; for they who are led aſide, or fall into them, diſcover the falſhood and inſincerity of their hearts, and none but ſuch as are not ſhaken or ſeduced by them, can approve themſelves to God or Men: ſo that neither can this or any other Plea Juſtifie our Diſſentions, or take off the force of our Apoſtle's Exhortation, *to be all of one mind*, which we ſee is not only poſſible by the Practice of the firſt Chriſtians, and the Prayer of our Saviour for the continuance of it, but a neceſſary Duty, by the many Precepts that enjoin and call us to it. From whence therefore I proceed,

Thirdly, To preſs this great and weighty Duty upon you, eſpecially at this time, that ſeems ſo loudly to call for it. To which end, I ſhall endeavour,

I.

I. To ſet before you the miſchief of Diviſions; And,

II. To repreſent to you the benefit of Unanimity, that you may learn to hate the One, and love the Other. For the

Firſt, The Miſeries of Diviſions are ſo many and great, that 'tis not eaſie to recount them; the Miſchief they do, both to private Perſons and publick Societies, is unſpeakable; they naturally ſour and alienate Mens minds from one another, and ſo deſtroy that mutual love and good-will which ſhould be cheriſhed and preſerved among them; they ſet Wives againſt Husbands, Children againſt Parents, and Servants againſt Maſters, and ſo divide a Houſe or Family againſt it ſelf, which muſt deſtroy the Peace and Order of it; for they that cannot go to the Houſe of God together as Friends, ſeldom keep well together at home; and ſuch as will not meet together at God's Table, find but little comfort at their own; the Reaſon whereof is plain; for, ſince the Affections follow the ſway and dictates of the Underſtanding, when the Minds are divided, the Will and Affections muſt be ſo too. And 'tis a vain unpracticable thing, to think of keeping

Love

Love and Unity among different Parties and Perſwaſions; for the ſeparating Party will be apt to alledg ſome faults in others, as the cauſe of their Separation, and that will move the Perſons from whom they ſeparate to recriminate, and expoſe their Errors, in their own Vindication; which things are apt to exaſperate and kindle a Flame, that is ſometimes very hardly Quenched.

But beſide theſe private Evils, Diviſions have a very pernicious Influence upon the Publick; for they undermine the Peace and Quiet of the World, and looſen the Bonds of human Society; they arm Men one againſt another, and make them ſpend that Zeal and Fury againſt each other, that ſhould be kept together to preſerve the Whole, by which means they fill the World with habitations of Cruelty, and hurl all things into Tumult and Confuſion. Hence we find our Saviour declaring, That *a Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf cannot ſtand*; for Diviſion naturally cauſes Weakneſs, and that brings on Ruin and Deſolation. Indeed Gunpowder is not ſo apt to blow up a Town, as Diviſions are to inflame a Country; they make Men ready to kindle with every Breath, and, like Tin-

der, to catch fire at every Spark; and 'tis too well known, how great a Flame ſuch Sparks have already kindled. In ſhort, Diviſions are the Bane of Peace and Love: they that delight in them are Troublers of the World here, and will be doom'd hereafter to the wretched Society of thoſe evil and envious Spirits that are at perpetual enmity and variance with each other; for turbulent and contentious tempers are the diſpoſitions of Hell, and qualifie for thoſe Infernal Regions where Diſcord and Animoſities abound. But,

Secondly, The danger of Diſcord is not greater than the benefits of Unanimity and Peace; and as the evil of the former is great enough to affright us from it, ſo is the comfort of the latter ſufficient to invite all good Chriſtians to it; for Unity is the Perfection of the Godhead, and Love is that darling Attribute by which
1 John 4. 8 he delights to be called; for *God is Love*. In this conſiſts the Happineſs of Heaven, the Joy of Angels, and the Bliſs of the Glorified Spirits made Perfect, who all join in one entire Conſort, and are ſo perfectly One in heart and mind, as if they were all animated by one Soul. If then it be the Glory and Happineſs of

Heaven

Heaven to unite in the Praiſes of our Maker, ſure it ſhould be our Study and Delight here on Earth to join together in his Service. This is an employment worthy of our beſt endeavours, and hath all that can be thought deſirable to encourage and reward it. *Behold, how good and pleaſant a thing it is* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) *for brethren to dwell together in Unity!* This is a Proſpect infinitely pleaſing and delightful in the Eyes of God and all good Men. *I was glad* (ſaith *David*) *when they ſaid unto me, come, let us go together to the Houſe of God: our feet ſhall ſtand within thy Gates, O Jeruſalem.* 'Tis recorded to the Honour of *Jeruſalem*, that 'twas *a City at Unity within* it ſelf; and nothing better fits us for *Jeruſalem* above, than to unite together in the Service of God, which puts a Comelineſs into Divine Worſhip, and adds Efficacy to our Prayers: This would make the World the Seat of Love, and fill it with quiet and eaſie Habitations; yea, it would make Earth an Emblem or Repreſentation of Heaven, and prepare us for thoſe happy Regions, where nothing but Peace and Concord dwell; for Heaven is the bleſſed Manſion of Love and Unity; there are no *Diſſenters* or *Non-Conformiſts* there,

Pſal. 133. 1, 2.

Pſal. 122. 1. 3.

Verſ 3.

there, but all conſpire together in perfect Harmony, and jointly ſing their unceſſant *Hallelujahs*; no turbulent and contentious Spirits will be admitted there, to diſturb the Peace and Joy of thoſe happy Regions; ſuch as love and make Diviſions will be ſent to their own place, and ſentenc'd to the diſmal Habitations of Diſcord and Diſſention. In a word, Unity is the Strength of Kingdoms, the Security of the Church, the Beauty of Religion, and the beſt Preparative for the Kingdom of Heaven.

Thus I have briefly ſet before you ſome of the many Miſeries of Diviſions, together with the great and the unſpeakable Advantages of Unity; in both which, Life and Death, Bleſſing and Curſing, are in a manner laid before you: They who walk in the ways of Truth and Peace, will in the end find Everlaſting Life; whereas the By-paths of Error and Diſſention lead down to the Chambers of Death. Chuſe then, my Brethren, this Day, which you will follow; and let your Wiſdom guide you to ſuch a choice as may never give you cauſe to repent. The Apoſtle's Advice is, to

Rom. 16. 16. *mark thoſe that cauſe Diviſions*, not to follow,

low, but *avoid them*; and our Text tells us, That *to be of one mind, and live in peace*, is the way to have *the God of love and peace to be with us*. Let me beſeech you therefore, as our Apoſtle did theſe *Corinthians*, That you would *all ſpeak the ſame thing, that there may be no Diviſions among you, but that ye be perfectly join'd together in the ſame mind and the ſame judgment, endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* 1 Cor. 1. 10. Eph. 4. 4.

This our Common Safety ſeems now eſpecially to call for: There are ſome who wait for the troubling of the Waters, to be fiſhing in them; there are others that ſeek to widen our Breaches, to let in the Common Enemy, and both are hard at work to increaſe our Differences, to carry on their ſeveral Deſigns by them: 'Tis high time then to unite, and to *know the things that belong to our peace, before they be hid from our eyes.* Let us ceaſe contending about Religion, and join together in the practice of it, leſt we loſe it all in the Scuffle; and let the ſenſe of the Common Danger drive us together, to prevent impending Ruin, which we cannot better do, than by being *all of one mind, ſtanding faſt in one ſpirit, with one mind, and ſtriving together for the Faith of the Goſpel*, Phil. i. 27. But

But how may we come to be thus like-minded in the great Affairs of Religion? This was the

Laſt Thing propounded to be ſpoken to; which being ſo neceſſary to be known, I ſhall add a few Directions, and conclude.

And *Firſt*, That we may be all of one Mind, we muſt keep cloſe to the Doctrine, the Diſcipline and Communion of the Catholick Church, and particularly of that ſound Part of it eſtabliſhed in the Nation or Country wherein we live; there can be no Union without ſomething to unite in, nor can we be united to the Catholick Church without joining with a National Church that is a true part of it, no more than a Member can belong to the Body, that is not join'd to any part of it. Now, the Diſcipline and Communion of the Church is a firm Bond of Peace, and a good Center of Unity, by keeping cloſe to which we may be truly ſaid to be join'd or united to the whole. 'Tis true indeed, a particular Church may be ſo corrupted in its Worſhip and Communion, that the Members may and ought to diſ-unite from it: But, thanks be to God, this cannot

cannot be ſaid or prov'd of the National Church of *England*, of which we have the happineſs to be Members, which having the truly Ancient, Primitive and Apoſtolical Doctrine and Diſcipline, the trueſt Faith, the pureſt Communion, and the beſt Rules of external Order and Decency, is juſtly reckon'd the ſoundeſt part of the Catholick Church, that is this day upon the face of the Earth. Now, whilſt we keep to this, we keep the Bond of Union, and may be all of one mind in the great Points of Religion: but when we break off from this, we break the Unity of the Church, we divide the One Body of Chriſt, and ſo become divided from the Whole, and one another. And therefore,

Secondly, To be all of one mind, we muſt abandon the ſeparate Meetings and Conventicles of Sectaries; for theſe, however they may be colour'd over, are the Nurſeries of Diſcord and Diviſion, and are no more to be reckon'd parts of the Church, than a Leg or an Arm cut off may be ſaid to be a part of the Body from which it ſtands divided. Theſe different Sects and Parties are plainly the *Diviſions* ſo much condemn'd by the Apoſtle, as the occaſion of *ſtrife and envying*; yea,

the ſeparate Meetings of Sectaries run the Diviſions of our days higher than thoſe of *Corinth*, for they proceeded not ſo far as to break Communion, for we read that *they came together in one place*, 1 Cor. xi. 20. Their fault was only crying up different Teachers of the ſame Church, whereas ours are plain Ruptures and Separations from it. And if thoſe leſſer Schiſms within the Church were ſo ſeverely condemn'd by the Apoſtle, of how much ſharper Rebukes may they be thought worthy, who raiſe Schiſms and Separations from it, ſetting up diſtinct Altars and ways of Worſhip in oppoſition to it, of whom we may ſay as *Jacob* did
Gen. 49. 6 of *Simeon* and *Levi*, *O my ſoul, come not thou into their ſecrets, unto their Aſſemblies, mine Honour, be not thou united*; for theſe are plainly the cauſes of all our Diſtractions, and the apparent obſtacles of Unanimity. Have not each Sect their ſeveral and different Opinions? and is it not frequent and faſhionable to ſet up for new Schemes and Notions in Religion? And how is it poſſible for Men to be of one mind, when ſuch ſwarms of Sects are continually buzzing ſuch contrary things into the minds of the People? Theſe ſeveral Sects and Parties have no

Bond

Bond of Union to hold them together; and having nothing to fix them, 'tis impoſſible for them to be, as the Apoſtle directs them, *of one mind*, or to *preſerve the Unity of Spirit*, without *a Bond of Peace*; and therefore, to be like-minded, we muſt not only keep cloſe to the Worſhip and Communion of that ſound part of the Catholick Church of which we are Members, but likewiſe carefully avoid all ſeparate and ſchiſmatical Meetings.

But beſide theſe, there are a ſort of lukewarm Chriſtians, that ſtand indifferently affected to the Church and the Conventicle, and as Intereſt, Humour or Occaſion ſerves, have recourſe to both, though they are true to neither. Theſe are the *double-minded men* mention'd by St. *James*, Chap. 1. 8. who *are unſtable in all their ways*; like the Worſhipers of *Baal*, they *halt between two Opinions*, and are ſo far from being of one mind with others, that they are ſeldom long of one mind with themſelves: ſuch as theſe being *neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm* and indifferent in their Duty, are threatned by God to be *ſpew'd out of his mouth*, Rev. iii. 15, 16. whom he therefore willeth *to be more zealous and repent*, ver. 19.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, To be all of one mind, we muſt ſubdue all manner of Pride, and learn the great Leſſon of Humility. The Grace of Humility teaches men to have low and mean thoughts of themſelves, to *think ſo-*
Rom 12.3 *berly, according as God hath given to every one the meaſure of Faith: in honour preferring one another, and eſteeming others better and wiſer than our ſelves*, eſpecially our Governours whom God hath ſet over us. This will keep Men modeſt and teachable, willing to learn, and ſtoop to the Wiſdom and Authority of their Betters, and that will mightily conduce to a Unity of Mind and Judgment: whereas Pride lifts men up with a vain conceit of their own Knowledge and Sanctity, and makes them think more highly of themſelves than they ought to think; by which means, inſtead of ſubmitting, they preſcribe to, and controul their Superiours, and ſet up their weaker Judgments againſt the Wiſdom of thoſe that are far above them both in Parts and Place: If all things be not done as they would have them, they quarrel with publick Orders and Conſtitutions, and will be framing new Schemes and Models of their own, which muſt neceſſarily diſtract Mens minds, and fill the World with endleſs

Quarrels

Quarrels and Diſputes; *A proud heart* (ſaith *Solomon*) *ſtirreth up ſtrife: and only by Pride cometh contention.* This prompts ſome to become the Heads and Leaders of Parties, and others to be the Diſciples and Followers of them, both which lead Men into different ways, and beget a diverſity of Opinions; and therefore, if we deſire to be, as we ought, of one mind, we muſt ſtrip our ſelves of all Pride and Haughtineſs of mind, which makes Men obſtinate and pertinacious in their Errors, *and be cloathed with humility*, which will render them more tractable and *ſubject one to another.*

Laſtly, To be of one mind, we muſt ſubdue all inordinate love of the World, and learn to moderate our deſires after the good things of this Life; for *the love of Money* (as the Apoſtle tells us) *is the root of all Evil*, and is particularly ſo of all the Diſcord and Diſſention that is found among us: 'Twas this mov'd *Judas* to ſell his Saviour, and this hath ſince mov'd others to ſell both their King and their Country; yea, *Ahab* by his Covetouſneſs is ſaid to *ſell himſelf to work wickedneſs*; Demas *forſook* the Apoſtles to follow this *preſent World*, and we read of others who *ran greedily after the error of*

Balaam

Balaam *for reward*, Jude, ver. 11. They that too eagerly purſue their own Intereſt, frequently leave the ways of Truth and Peace, and are eaſily led into any gainful Error; this claps a wrong Bias upon the Mind, and hath turn'd many into the ways of Separation, by which means they have been impatient of Truth, and unable to bear ſound Doctrine; and therefore, to promote Unity, we muſt prefer the welfare of our Souls before that of the Body, and chooſe the laſting Treaſures of the next World, before the periſhing Trifles of this; 'tis too apparent how great a hand worldly Profit hath in the Factions and Diviſions of Church and State, both which are mightily promoted by hopes of Gain, and moved by the wheels of Intereſt; And therefore, to prevent theſe Evils, we muſt wean our ſelves from the love of this World, and the things of it, which are but too apt to inveigle and ſeduce us; beware of eſpouſing Sects and Parties in Religion for any ſecular ends; for this is to make Gain to be Godlineſs, and is not to ſerve God, but *Mammon*.

Upon the whole then, let us take the Apoſtle's Advice, and labour all to be of one mind in the great Affairs of Religion, which

which will be both the Beauty and Bulwark of Church and State; Let no ſeeming difficulty or impoſſibility diſcourage our deſires and endeavours after it. We ſee we may be of one mind, if we have a mind to be ſo; and our Saviour's Prayer and Precept ſhew it to be his mind to have it ſo: Let us not then be wanting to our ſelves, in neglecting the proper means of effecting it. Our own and the Nation's Happineſs loudly call for it, and depend upon it: Let us therefore ſeek Peace, and enſue it, *and the God of Love and Peace will be with us.* This is the encouragement here added in the Cloſe to quicken us to our Duty, becauſe in ſo doing *the God of Love and Peace*, who is the Author and Encourager of both, *will be with us*, to bleſs and aſſiſt our endeavours; he *will be with us* to *ſtabliſh*, *ſtrengthen*, *ſettle us*; in a word, he *will be with us* with his Grace and Holy Spirit in this World, and crown us with Glory and Immortality in the World to come; *Which God grant, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, to whom with the Holy Spirit, be all Honour and Glory, Might, Majeſty and Dominion, now and evermore.* Amen.

The

THE

True Reformation of Manners:

OR, THE

NATURE and QUALIFICATIONS

OF

True Zeal.

GALAT. IV. 18.

—It is good to be Zealously affected always in a good thing.

THE occasion of these Words, was from some false Teachers, that had crept into the Churches of *Galatia*, with a design to destroy the Credit of the Apostle, and the Doctrine deliver'd by him: To which end they preach'd up *Circumcision*, and other Rites and Ceremonies of *Moses*'s Law, on purpose to undermine the Truths of the Gospel.

In

In this Attempt they prevail'd ſo far as to ſhake the Faith of many, who began to decry the Apoſtle, and to cry up thoſe deceitful Teachers above him. This put St. *Paul*, in this Chapter, upon reaſoning the Caſe with them, ver. 16. *Am I become your Enemy becauſe I tell you the Truth? i. e.* Am I become vile and deſpicable in thoſe *eyes*, which you would, not long ſince, have *pluck'd out and given to me?* How comes this change to be made in you, that the great Love you lately bore to my Perſon and Doctrine, is thus of a ſudden turn'd into Hatred of both? Why; he found that an *Enemy* had done this; *i. e.* Thoſe falſe Teachers, taking the opportunity of his Abſence, had planted their Tares, to hinder the growth of that good Seed he had ſow'd among them; and therefore with great earneſtneſs cautions theſe *Galatians* againſt them, as the great enemies of their Faith and Salvation; letting them know, that whatever ſhew they might make of *Zeal* towards *God*, or Affection towards them, there was nothing under it, but Falſhood and Hypocriſy. *They Zealouſly affect you*, ſaith he, ver. 17. *but not well:* There is no Sincerity in their goodlieſt Pretences, and in all they

ſay

ſay or do, their Love is not to you, but themſelves; Yea, *They would exclude you*, (ſaith he) *that you might affect them*: meaning, that they would ſhut you out from the true Faith, that you might affect their Perſons, and embrace their Errors. Wherefore he wills them to beware of them, and to ſhun them as Cheats and Impoſtors; and from their falſe and counterfeit *Zeal*, takes occaſion to recommend True *Zeal* to them, in the Words of the Text: *But it is good to be Zealouſly affected always in a good thing.* In treating of which Words, I muſt enquire,

Firſt, Into the Nature of *Zeal*, and ſhew what it is to be *Zealouſly affected.*

Secondly, I muſt ſpeak to the two Qualifications of true *Zeal* mention'd in the Text; the one reſpecting the Time of its continuance, which muſt be *always*; the other, the Object about which it is to be employ'd, which is a *good thing.*

Thirdly, I muſt ſhew the Goodneſs or Excellency of true *Zeal* from thoſe Words, *It is good to be Zealouſly affected*, &c.

Fourthly, I muſt lay open ſome of the Miſtakes and Miſcarriages of *Zeal*, and then conclude with an Inference or two from the whole.

I be-

I begin then with the Enquiry into the Nature of *Zeal*, that we may see what it is to be Zealously affected; and and here we may note,

First, That *Zeal*, in the general Notion of it, is *a warmth of Mind, that carries it out in an eager pursuit of its Object, accompanied with Indignation at any thing that oppôses, or lies in its way:* And this is sometimes in Scripture, and other Authors, taken in a bad sence, for Emulations, Wrath, and bitter Envyings: St. *James* makes mention of πικρὸς ζῆλος, a *bitter Zeal*, proceeding from an overheated and exasperated Mind, and is translated, *bitter Envyings*, Jam. 3. 14. St. *Paul* reckons ζῆλοι, which is render'd, *Emulations*, among the works of the flesh, *Gal.* 5. 20. This is an inordinate heat of the Soul, whereby 'tis carried out too eagerly after some earthly, sensual Objects or Designs. But passing by this, we are now to treat of a Religious *Zeal*, which is *a warm and powerful Inclination of the Mind after Heaven and Heavenly things.* For the better understanding whereof, we must note,

2*ly*, That *Zeal* is not any one single Passion or Affection, but a mixture or composition of more; 'tis made up

chiefly of Love and Anger, together with those intermediate Passions, of Desire, Joy, Indignation, and the like, that partake of both. The first and greatest Ingredient of *Zeal* is Love, for none can be Zealously affected to any thing, which he doth not truly love; and where that is, 'twill draw after it a desire of attaining and enjoying it; and according to the degrees of love will the desire encrease, and improve into longings and impatience. Again,

Zeal is accompanied with Joy and Delight in pleasing and possessing what it makes after, and where the Object is infinite, as when 'tis plac'd on *God*, it advances into Extasy and Rapture. Furthermore,

Anger is an Ingredient of *Zeal*, which sets the Soul against whatever opposes the thing Beloved; and proportionable to the opposition, does the Anger encrease, arising sometimes to Wrath and Indignation, and upon any frustration 'tis attended with Grief and Sorrow.

Thus is *Zeal compounded* of various and different Passions, upon the well or ill *tempering* and *mixing* whereof, does the goodness or badness of *Zeal* depend. That *Zeal* that hath the greatest mixture of

of the mild, loving and charitable Affections is commonly the beſt; that wherein the harſh, ſoure and hot Paſſions are moſt predominant, is very often inordinate: And that, where the angry Paſſions not only exceed, but exclude the more calm and benign Ones, is generally ſinful. Moreover, *Zeal* is not only a compoſition of ſundry Paſſions, but a *high degree* and *intention* of them, and beſpeaks not barely the *reality*, but a *fervency* of Affection; 'tis ſuch a warmth of Mind, as influences the *whole* Man, and renders all the Powers of the Soul more *vigorous* and *lively* in its deſires and proſecutions; and ſo 'tis oppos'd to Coldneſs and Lukewarmneſs.

So that true *Zeal* is a gracious conſtitution of the whole Mind, and is rather a *conſtellation* of Graces, than *one particular* Grace. 'tis what Health is to Life, the ſpring of all its activity and motion; and reſembles that Heroick Vertue deſcrib'd by the Moraliſts, which is not ſo much a *diſtinct* Vertue of it ſelf, as the *higheſt pitch* and *eminence* of all other Vertues.

From this brief deſcription of *Zeal* we may learn, what it is to be *Zealouſly affected*; namely, to have the Mind warm-

ly ſtirring or moving in earneſt deſires, and an eager purſuit of ſome ſuitable and deſirable Object, and conſequently two things muſt concur to this zealous Affection, *viz.* Light in the head, and Heat in the heart.

Firſt, To be Zealouſly affected implies light and knowledge in the Head, for *Ignoti nulla Cupido*, None can affect that, of which he hath no knowledge. Light is the Director of *Zeal*, without which 'twill miſtake its Object, and neceſſarily go awry. 'Tis a *blind* Zeal, that is void of Knowledge, and therefore what Light is to the Eye, that Knowledge is to the Soul, it ſhews its way, and guides all its operations. Again,

Secondly, To be Zealouſly affected imports not only light in the Head, but heat in the Heart; and therefore 'tis often compar'd to Fire, whoſe property it is to warm and enliven, St. *Paul* ſtiles it *a fervency of Spirit*, Rom. 12. 11. which ſignifies ſuch an inward warmth of Mind, as *cheriſhes* in it a ſpiritual Life, quickens Vertue, and makes us *grow in Grace, and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*. In ſhort, Zeal is a vehement Affection, or a ſtrong Bias and Propenſity of the Soul towards its Object;

Object; and to be Zealously affected, is to be carried out with earnest Desires and Endeavours after it; not without some Hatred, Trouble and Indignation at whatsoever does hinder or oppose it. This is the Nature of *Zeal*. But

How must it be qualify'd, that it may be *good* to be thus Zealously affected? Why, our Text mentions two Qualifications to make it so.

The one respects the *Time* of its continuance, it must be *always*; the other, the *Object*, it must be in a *good thing*.

First, To be Zealously affected aright, it must be *always*, not *now and then*, by fits and starts; but keeping up an ardent flame of Love, still burning in our Breasts. The Apostle supposes here, that these *Galatians* were well enough affected whilst he was *present* with them, but it did not continue in his *absence*, it soon wore off, and therefore he wills them to be Zealously affected *always*. They who still frequent and keep close to the Worship and Communion of the Church, may be well enough suppos'd to be Zealously affected towards it; but they who come to it only *to serve a turn*, may be justly thought otherwise; yea, when they who seldom or never attend

the publick Worship, *of a ſudden, on a particular occaſion* flock in great Numbers to it; and with that Formality and Appearance too, as if, with *Jehu*, they would alarm Spectators, to *come and ſee their Zeal for the Lord of Hoſts*: This is very ſuſpicious, and looks more like the reſult of *Contrivance* and *Deſign*, than the effect of *true and ſound Religion*. For true Zeal is *permanent* and *laſting*; it proceeds from a *vital* Principle within, which will maintain a kindly and conſtant heat in the Soul; 'tis not like the fits of an Ague, that come and go again, but like the *Altar* Fires, that were always kept burning, or the Veſtal Flames, that never went out: 'tis true indeed, it may, and does admit of *intermiſſions*, but 'tis never *extinguiſh'd*; but like the natural heat of the Heart, 'twill abide as long as Life continues. All that ſeeming Zeal of the Hypocrite, that ſo often wears off, and grows *cold* again, is but falſe Fire, 'tis only a *painted*, and no *real* Flame.

If you obſerve it, you ſhall find ſome Men at *ſome* Times, and in *ſome* religious Exerciſes, exceeding warm and zealous, their Affections ſeem all *in a flame*, and themſelves under the tranſports of Divine Love; who yet in a little time grow cold

cold again, and have no appearance of Life or Heat left in them. Theſe are only *paroxiſms* of Zeal, and the *preternatural heats* of the Hypocrite's Devotion, whereas true Zeal is ever more *uniform* and *laſting*; and where the Spirit is truly *touch'd with this Coal from the Altar*, 'twill preſerve an habitual conſtant light and heat in the Soul. To this end, Zeal muſt be ſober and well temper'd, not over hot and violent; for *Nullum violentum eſt perpetuum*, No violent thing is laſting; Such tranſports ſpend the Spirits too faſt, to continue long; Nature ſtruggles under any violence, and labours to be eas'd and rid of it, and Religion too groans under ſuch violent *fits* of Zeal, and cannot long continue in ſuch *extreams*; and therefore ſuch tranſient fiery heats are far from the ſobriety of Religion, and the temper of true Devotion. The Prophet reſembles ſome Men's Righteouſneſs to the *Morning Cloud, and the early Dew that ſoon paſſeth away*; and we may liken others to a flaſh of Lightning, which gives a ſhort blaze, but is quickly out. The Apoſtle obſerves of ſome of theſe *Galatians*, that *they ran well for a time* in their Chriſtian Courſe; but they ſoon waxed faint and tired, and

ſo loſt the Prize, for not holding out to end of the Race. Chriſtianity is often in Scripture ſtyl'd a *Warfare*, in which, you know, 'tis not the furious *Charge*, but the deliberate *Courage* and *Conſtancy* that wins the Field: In like manner, 'tis *Perſeverance* only, that commends our Zeal, and crowns our Actions with ſucceſs and victory. And therefore the Apoſtle wills us to *hold on* in our Chriſtian Courſe, and to be zealouſly affected *always*, even to the end; which is the firſt Qualification of true Zeal. The ſecond reſpects the *Object* about which it is converſant, and that muſt be a *good thing*: *It is good to be zealouſly affected always in a good thing*; where we are taught to meaſure the *goodneſs* of our Zeal, not by the *height* of the *Paſſions* of which 'tis compos'd; but by the *goodneſs* of the thing, about which 'tis employ'd. And here two things are to be obſerv'd for the better clearing of this Matter: As,

Firſt, The object of our Zeal may be ſometimes a thing that is *evil*, and yet a Zeal about it may be a *good* and *commendable* thing; as for example, All Sin in general, and particularly Atheiſm, Profaneneſs, Sacriledge, Schiſm, and the like, are all very *bad* things: and yet

yet to be zealous againſt theſe, is to be Zealouſly affected in a *good* thing: but here the Zeal conſiſts, not in the *love*, but *hatred* of them, not in *practiſing*, but *puniſhing* of them; yea, the *worſe* the thing is, the *better* is the *Zeal* that is employ'd againſt it: Thus the more bold and daring any Sin or Wickedneſs is grown, the higher act of Zeal is it, to oppoſe and ſuppreſs it. Again,

Secondly, A thing may be materially good, and yet a Zeal about it may be ſometimes a very bad thing; as for inſtance, All acts of Religion in general, and particularly Praying, Hearing, Reformation of Manners, and the like, are all *very good* things; and yet a *ſeeming* Zeal about them, may be ſometimes a very evil and pernicious thing; as when they are embas'd by bad Ends, and made uſe of to promote evil Deſigns: you know the Phariſees *made long Prayers, the better to devour Widows houſes*; you cannot be ignorant, how ſome upon occaſion attend the publick Worſhip, only to *qualify* them for an *Office*, and take the holy Sacrament, to enable them to *undermine* the Communion of the Church. Do not ſome talk much of *reforming* the Manners of others, without any regard

at

at all to their own? 'Tis no new thing to pretend *Reformation*, to carry on very bad Designs; and we all know what vile things have been acted under a *cloak* and colour of Religion: so that a great *talk* and *appearance* for Reformation, may be rather Collusion, than Zeal; and a pompous shew of Religion about it, may be rather a mocking, than serving of *God*.

In short, A thing may be *materially* good, and carry a fair *shew* of being so; and yet may want many Qualifications, that are necessary to make it *really* and *in truth* such. It may proceed from a bad *Principle*, be carried on by bad *Means*, and tend to a bad *End*; either of these may spoil the goodness of the thing, and marr the *Zeal* that is employ'd about it. The Object then of *Zeal* may be good and evil, and a hearty loving of the *one*, and hating the *other*, will justify our *Zeal* in *both*: for as Goodness hath charms enough to engage the Affections, so Sin hath deformity enough to beget dislike and aversation; and consequently to be zealous *for* the one, and *against* the other, is in both to be zealously affected in a good thing.

But to come to particulars: What are those

thoſe good or evil things, about which our Zeal may be thus *lawfully* and *laudably* employ'd? I ſhall mention ſome of the *chief* of them, the better to direct you in theſe great and weighty Matters of Religion. As,

First, To be zealous for the *Glory of God*, and the *Honour of his Laws*, is to be zealouſly affected in a good thing. The Glory of *God* is the great end of our Creation; and as the Almighty ever propounds it to *Himſelf*, ſo ought *we* to make it the principal aim and ſcope of all our Actions: *Whether ye eat or drink* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *or whatever ye do, do all to the praiſe and glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. This is to be the chief care and buſineſs of our Lives, in which if we are ſincere, we cannot eaſily exceed; for the higheſt degrees of all *pious* Affections, are to be fix'd on *God*: He is to have our moſt ardent Love, our ſtrongeſt Deſire, our firmeſt Hope, our pureſt Joy; all which, when ſcrew'd up to the higheſt pitch, fall vaſtly ſhort of the infinite Perfections of his Nature, and our great Obligations to his Goodneſs. And therefore our Minds ſhould be eagerly bent on things, whereby *God* may be *glorified*, that his Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs

neſs may be celebrated in the World, and his Praiſes ſound to the ends of the Earth. Again, We are to ſet our ſelves with all our might and main againſt thoſe things, whereby *God* may be *diſhonour'd*, his Name *prophan'd*, his Worſhip *neglected* or *contemn'd*: we are to have a tender love and eſteem for *God's Laws*, and be deeply affected with the breach and violation of them: Theſe are *proper* Matter for our *Zeal*, and are to be proſecuted with the utmoſt warmth and vigour of all our Faculties; and when we ſtand thus affected to the Honour of *God*, and his Laws, then may we be truly ſaid to be *zealouſly affected* in *a good thing*; yea, in the *chiefeſt* good, and the *beſt* of things.

Secondly, To be zealous for the *Honour* of *Chriſt*, and the *Doctrine* deliver'd by *Him*, is to be *zealouſly affected in a good thing*. This is the Zeal here recommended by St. *Paul*, namely, To ſtrive for the *Truths* of the Goſpel, againſt thoſe falſe Teachers, that would ſubvert or undermine them. And herein, we of *this Age* ought to be more than ordinarily zealous, when the Being and Divinity of *Chriſt* are both call'd in queſtion, and the Myſteries of the Goſpel not only

denied

denied, but *derided*. Is not a *Crucified* Saviour once more become a *ſtumbling-block* to ſome, and to others *fooliſhneſs*? And do not too many uſe their Tongues and Wits, in decrying all Divine Revelations? And is it not time to appear for Chriſt, and his Religion, in ſuch a profane and diſſolute Age? St. *Jude* exhorts Chriſtians to *Contend earneſtly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*; and elſewhere we are charg'd, not to let go, but to *hold faſt the Profeſſion of our Faith, without wavering*; meaning, that we ſhould not *betray* it by Cowardice, nor *corrupt* it with Error, nor ſuffer it to be loſt or ſwallowed up by Infidelity; but to come forth in the defence of the Truth, againſt all its Adverſaries; to uſe our utmoſt endeavours, in our ſeveral Stations, to vindicate the Honour of our *Saviour*, if ever we hope to be ſav'd by him. *He that denies me before Men*, (ſaith Chriſt himſelf) *him will I deny before my Father that is in Heaven.* Now to *diſown* the *Truths* of the Goſpel, or to *refuſe* to *appear* in the defence of them, when call'd in queſtion, is indeed no better than to *deny* him: And what can ſuch expect, but to be for ever *diſown'd* and *deny'd* by him at the laſt day? Where-

fore

fore 'tis both the Duty and Intereſt of all that are call'd Chriſtians, to be zealous for the *Honour of Chriſt*, to vindicate his Truths, and to adorn his Doctrine with a holy Converſation.

Thirdly, To be zealous for the *Church* of *God*, is to be zealouſly affected in a *good* thing: And that as the Church is ſometimes taken for the *Houſe* of God, and likewiſe for the orderly Conſtitution of Divine *Worſhip* perform'd in it; both which are proper Matter to employ our Zeal. That ardent Love we owe to God, requires us to love the things of God, and to have a due regard to all that belongs to him; among which, we are commanded to *hallow his Sabbath, and to reverence his Sanctuary*. *David* tells us that the *Zeal of God's houſe had even conſumed him*, Pſal. 69. 9. He was ſo paſſionately affected towards the *reverence* and *decency* of thoſe Places, that he thought he could not better ſhew his Honour to God, than by reverencing the *Place* where his honour dwells. After that we read, what time, care and coſt King *Solomon* beſtow'd in building and beautifying the Temple; by which, he at once erected an Habitation for the Glory of his Maker, and a laſting Monument of his own Honour. But

But leſt any ſhould take this only for a piece of *Old Teſtament* Zeal, we find our Bleſſed Saviour ſo zealous for the honour of the Temple, that he *never* diſcover'd a higher act of Indignation, than againſt the *Prophaners* of it; for himſelf whipp'd the Buyers and Sellers out of it; who had made the *Houſe of Prayer a Den of Thieves*, overturning the Tables of the Money-changers, and the Seats of them that ſold Doves; and that with an Indignation too, ſo much beſide his ordinary temper, that the Diſciples could not but call to mind, and apply to him, what was propheſied of him, *The Zeal of thy houſe hath eaten me up.* By this great example we learn, that a true Chriſtian Zeal may be *well* employ'd about the purifying of God's *houſe*, and ſecuring it from all profanation. Moreover, we find the Apoſtles extremely zealous for the *Peace* and *Unity* of the Church, as alſo for the *comelineſs*, *order* and *reverence* of the *publick* Worſhip us'd in it: So that to be zealous againſt *Sacriledge*, which is the polluting of God's holy Temple; and likewiſe againſt *Schiſm*, which is the dividing the Body of Chriſt, is a *pious*, *well-grounded* and *commendable* Zeal.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, To be zealous in the *Cauſe*, and for the Honour of God's *Miniſters*, is to be zealouſly affected in a *good* thing; for theſe belong to him as his *Ambaſſadors*, and therefore are to be lov'd and treated accordingly: *Let men ſo account of us* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *as of the Miniſters of Chriſt, and ſtewards of the Myſteries of God*, and for that reaſon to be counted *worthy of double Honour*: The Kindneſs or Contempt ſhew'd to them redounds to *him* that ſends them; for *He that deſpiſes you* (ſaith Chriſt) *deſpiſes me, and he that deſpiſes me, deſpiſes him that ſent me*; and therefore our Zeal for Chriſt and his Truth, may and ought to be expreſt by eſpouſing the Cauſe of his *Miniſters*, eſpecially when the great Contempt of Religion hath occaſion'd too great a Contempt of the Diſpenſers of it.

Laſtly, To be zealous for the *People* of God, that is, for their Happineſs and Salvation, is to be zealouſly affected in a *good* thing: Next to the Glory of God, and our own Salvation, we are to tender the Welfare and Salvation of *others*; and this is to be done by our good Wiſhes, hearty Prayers, and beſt Endeavours for them: we find *Moſes* ſo far tranſported with love and deſire towards the *Iſraelites*,

lites, that he preferr'd their publick Happineſs and Salvation, before the private welfare of his own Soul; praying thus in their behalf, either *blot* out their *Sins*, or *blot* out *my name, out of the book that thou haſt written*, Ex. 32. 32. Under the like tranſport of Affection we find St. *Paul* declaring, that his *Hearts deſire and Prayer unto God was, that Iſrael might be ſaved*; withall wiſhing himſelf *accurſed from Chriſt, for his Brethren and Kinsfolk according to the fleſh*, Rom. 9. 3. which great Examples recommend to us, if not ſo high a pitch of *Zeal*, yet a moſt ardent love and deſire of doing good to all Men; and eſpecially to uſe our beſt endeavours to ſave their *Souls*, which is the greateſt good that we can do them; herein we ſhall tread in the ſteps of our *Bleſſed Saviour*, who *went up and down doing good* both to the Souls and Bodies of Men, which is ſuch a noble, generous and beneficial piece of Charity, as very well deſerves our utmoſt Zeal and Vigour.

In a word, To be zealous in the Cauſe of Religion, againſt Atheiſm and Profaneneſs; to be zealous for the Word of God, againſt Deiſm and Infidelity; for the Houſe and Worſhip of God, againſt

Schiſm and Sacriledge; for the People of God, againſt Seducers that *lay in wait to deceive*, is to be zealouſly affected in *good* things, and is highly becoming all ſuch as are called by the Name of Chriſt, and would advance the Honour and Intereſt of Chriſtianity; which things require not only *unwearied Diligence*, but undaunted *Courage* and *Reſolution* to effect them; and therefore to engage and encourage you to ſet about them, I ſhall proceed to the

Third thing to be conſider'd in our Text, *viz.* the goodneſs and excellency of *true Zeal*, from thoſe words, *It is good to be zealouſly affected*, &c. 'Tis *good* to *our ſelves*, for thereby we become like unto *God*, and imitate the Divine Goodneſs; 'tis *good unto others*, for as one Coal kindles another, ſo one man's Zeal helps to quicken another's; and blows up both into a bright and uſeful Flame: 'tis *good* to a *whole* Church and Country, who ſhare in the benefit, and reap the fruits of a well-guided Zeal; yea, 'tis *good* in all the ſences of Goodneſs, for 'tis *Bonum honeſtum, utile & jucundum*, 'tis pious, profitable and pleaſant; 'tis the *top* and *perfection* of all Virtue, the *beauty*, *ſtrength* and *ornament* of all Religion, and adds,

as

as I may ſay, a Grace to all other Graces.

Indeed, what Heat is to the Body, that is Zeal to the Soul; the very *life*, *health* and *vigour* of it, the ſource of all its activity and motion: and as the Body without Heat, is but a heavy, lumpiſh Carcaſe, ſo the Soul without Zeal, is ſluggiſh and unactive, and little better than *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*. But the Goodneſs of Zeal may be beſt ſeen in the *good Effects* produc'd by it, and the greatneſs of the Reward annext to it.

Firſt, I ſay, the Goodneſs of Zeal may be ſeen in the *good Effects* produc'd by it; Great and Noble things have been atchiev'd by fervent Zeal; it hath inſpir'd the Soul with vigour and courage, ſtrong enough to conquer the greateſt difficulties, and to carry it above and beyond all oppoſition: by this *Lot* deferr'd the deſtruction of *Sodom*, and had there been a few more ſuch, it would have prevented that direful Conflagration that conſum'd them: For as one heat draws out another, ſo the fire of *true Zeal* weakens the fire of God's *jealouſy*, and keeps his *wrath* from breaking forth. *Phinehas*'s Zeal ſtopt the fury of the deſtroying Angel, caus'd the Plague to ceaſe, and reſtor'd Health and Peace un-

to *Israel.* The time would fail me, to rehearse the many and great things that have been effected by it, for the honour of *God*, the welfare of his Church, and the safety of his People: neither indeed can it be otherwise, for *Zeal* kindles the flames of Love in the Breast of our Maker, and draws his affections to us; it engages him of our side, and *if God be for us, who can be against us?* Nothing can be too great for his infinite *Goodness* to grant, and nothing can be too hard for his infinite *Power* to effect for us.

But the Goodness of *Zeal* will more fully appear, in the *greatness of the Reward* annext to it hereafter; when our imperfect desires of promoting *God*'s Glory now, will end in the advancement of our own; when the little sparks of Zeal here, will improve into a celestial Fire, which will still burn in *our* Breasts towards *God*, and in *His* towards *us.* In a word, this zealous disposition will prepare and qualify us for the blissful Regions above, where our present faint Praisings of *God*, shall be advanc'd into extasy and rapture; and we, like the *Seraphims*, shall dwell for ever in the pure and unquenchable *flames* of Divine Love: Which, whoever well considers, will see abundant

abundant cauſe to ſay with the Apoſtle, that *'Tis good to be zealouſly affected always in a good thing.*

Thus having ſhew'd the *Nature* and *Properties* of *true Zeal*, the Paſſions of which 'tis compos'd, the things about which it is to be employ'd, together with the goodneſs and excellency of it, when ſo qualify'd; I proceed now to conſider ſome of thoſe *dangerous Miſtakes* and *Miſcarriages* of Zeal, that are to be found in the World; and theſe are indeed but too many, of which I ſhall mention a few: To which end you may obſerve,

Firſt, that *Zeal* being compounded of the two *ruling* Paſſions of the Soul, *Love* and *Anger*, may and often does admit of two *extreams*; the one in the *exceſs*, when 'tis over-hot and eager; the other in the *defect*, when 'tis too cold or luke-warm; and 'tis too frequent and eaſy for Men to fall into one of theſe: The firſt is an inordinate *heat* in Religion, which tranſports Men beyond the true bounds, and runs it into ſpiritual *Fury* and *Enthuſiaſm*; of this kind was that of the *Jewiſh Zealots*, who pretending to a ſecret Impulſe from above, did many vile and enormous things, committing Riots,

Rapins, Murders, and ſo deſtroy'd the Temple by an irregular Zeal in defending it; which intemperate heat of theirs, occaſion'd great Troubles to that whole Church and Nation. And very like to this is the *furious* and *diſorderly* Zeal of *Sectaries* and *Enthuſiaſts* in our days, who under a pretence of higher Illuminations, and divine Inſpirations, have greatly diſturb'd the peace of Kingdoms, and by their fierce and eager Contentions about Religion, have endanger'd the loſs of all: This hot *fiery* Zeal our bleſſed Saviour blam'd in ſome of his own Diſciples, who, in a fit of Rage, call'd for Fire from Heaven, to conſume the *Samaritans*; for which they receiv'd that ſharp Rebuke, that *They knew not what manner of Spirit they were of*; they did not know or conſider the true Spirit of Chriſtianity, which was not to *deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave them.* So that a Zeal that is void of Charity, and inſenſible of the Publick Good, is certainly irregular; and when it tranſports Men beyond the bounds of Meekneſs and Sobriety, is inconſiſtent with true Religion: and therefore to ſet it right, it muſt be temper'd with Wiſdom, and abound more in the *mild* and *good-natur'd Affections*, than in the

the more *vehement* and *wrathful Paſſions*, which are too apt to become inordinate: And theſe extravagant heats and tranſports in Matters of Religion, are the exceſs of *Zeal*, the miſchief whereof is too viſible to need laying open.

But 'twere well, if ſome Men did not offend as much in the *defect*, as others do in the *exceſs* of *Zeal*; and that the evil of the *one*, were not as dangerous as the miſchief of the *other*: But alas! the miſeries of *both* are too apparent to be either deny'd or diſguis'd: For is not ſome Men's indifference and careleſneſs in Religion, as much ſhort of *true Zeal*, as others fierce Paſſions and contentions are beyond it? And is not *one* of theſe too often the cauſe or occaſion of the *other*? Does not Religion ſuffer as much in the Lewdneſs, and want of Sobriety in *ſome* Men's Lives, as by the inordinate *Zeal*, and unneceſſary Rigours of *others*? And is not Atheiſm the plain conſequent of the open looſeneſs of the one, as well as the falſe and pretended ſtrictneſs of the other? Of both theſe *our* unhappy Age affords but too many Inſtances, which may teach us to avoid both theſe Rocks, and to ſteer our Courſe between the fury of ſome Men's *Zeal*, and the ſcandal of others Profaneneſs.

Secondly, Another Error in *Zeal*, is when 'tis void of *Knowledge*, or acts contrary to it: this is a *blind Zeal*, which leads Men headlong into many extravagancies; and this is in a great measure owing either to the *ignorance* or *subtlety* of false Teachers, who seek to work on the *Passions* of Men, without rightly informing their *Judgment*; by which means they are taught eagerly to contend for, or against things, without understanding the goodness or badness of either. If you observe it, you shall find those many times the greatest *Zealots*, that are most ignorant; like the *Andabatæ* fighting in the dark, and contending for they know not what, or why. St. *Paul* bore Record of some in his time, that they had a *Zeal*, but 'twas *not according to knowledge*: This is a Heat without Light, which tends rather to destroy, than to direct; true *Zeal* in the *Heart* is evermore guided by a true light in the *Head*, it begins with Knowledge, and is conducted by it; whereas false *Zeal* begins with the Affections, and commonly ends there, seldom going any farther than an ignorant and violent Passion.

Thirdly, There is a *counterfeit* and *hypocritical Zeal*, which warms only the

out-

out-side, and consists in a superficial shew of Piety and Devotion; it resembles the heat of a Fever, that scorches the extreme Parts, but leaves the Heart cold and unaffected: *Pone in pectore dextram, nil calet*: There is no heat or warmth at all within, even when it seems to burn and flame most without. Of this kind was the Zeal of the *Pharisees*, who *fasted* and *prayed, to be seen of men*, and did all their good Works meerly for Vanity and Ostentation; they had no *inward* Principle of spiritual Life or Motion, but were acted meerly by external Motives and Inducements: such are the superficial heats of too many *Zealots*, who seem all on fire without, when the Heart, like *Nabal*'s is as cold as a Stone.

Fourthly, There is a Temporary *Zeal*, which like a Vapour or Comet, *appeareth for a while, and then vanisheth away*: such was that of *Jehu*, who *drove on* furiously for a time, and destroy'd the Monuments of Idolatry; but being settled in the Kingdom, his *Zeal* for Religion was at an end, and turn'd only to his own advancement. Such likewise was the Mercenary and Selfish *Zeal* of those, that followed our blessed Saviour *for the Loaves*, and kept with him while any thing was to

be

be gotten by him; but when that fail'd, they forſook and walked no more with him: This a Flame that is blown in and out with the Wind, and varies with every blaſt. Again,

Fifthly, There is a *partial Zeal*, which makes Men warm in *ſome* Duties of Religion, and cold in others of equal neceſſity and importance; and likewiſe very earneſt in ſuppreſſing *one or more* Vices, and yet very favourable and indulgent to *others* equally crying and enormous. If you obſerve it, you will find ſome hot enough for *Preaching*, but cold for *Praying*; and tho' they talk much of reforming of *others* Manners, are yet but too careleſs and negligent of *their own*. May we not ſee many great Enemies indeed to Idolatry and Profaneneſs, who yet are well enough reconcil'd to Sacriledge and Schiſm? and make up that with advantage to one Vice, which they ſeem to take from another. This is to *compound* the Matter with *God*, and to make the keeping of one Law, atone for the breach of another. True and thorough Reformation extends to the hatred of *all* Vice, and the practice of *all* Vertue; without which, the moſt zealous pretences to *Reformation*, are but falſhood and hypocriſy. Sixthly,

Sixthly, There is a *busy pragmatical* Zeal, that carries private Men beyond the bounds of *their own* Calling and Busineſs, and makes them invade the Callings and Buſineſs of others, intruding into the Offices of Princes, Magiſtrates, Judges and Miniſters; prying into and cenſuring the Actions of their Superiors, and dictating to thoſe by whom they are to be govern'd: Thoſe are thoſe *buſy-bodies* mention'd by the Apoſtle, who meddle with things they underſtand not, and belong not to them: True Zeal makes Men ſtudy *to be quiet, and do their own buſineſs*, without thruſting themſelves unſeaſonably into other Men's; it puts Men upon the ſtudy of *their own* Hearts, mortifying *their own* Sins, and reforming *their own* Lives, which is enough to employ the Zeal of the Beſt Chriſtian: whereas 'tis too apparent, how ſome Men's Zeal prompts them to wander too much abroad, and to converſe too little at home; hence you ſhall find them very fierce and forward in declaiming againſt the Sins of others, as if they had *none* of their own to amend or complain of; how frequently do they call to Heaven for Vengeance on *National* Wickedneſs, as if they had no *ſhare* in the Guilt, and were

were ſecur'd from bearing a *Part* in the Puniſhment of it? Yea, 'tis no new thing for them, to condemn that in others, which they allow in themſelves; and to inveigh bitterly againſt others failings, when at the ſame time they eaſily overlook their own enormities: This is the guiſe and practice of too many Zealots, which may carry ſomething of the ſhow, but hath nothing of the ſubſtance and reality of True Religion.

Laſtly, The *Zeal* commended in our Text, hath reſpect to *Things*, not Perſons: 'tis good to be zealouſly affected always in a good *Thing*: A Zeal either for, or againſt *Perſons* is commonly *factious* and *diſorderly*: The *having ſome Men's Perſons in Admiration*, and others in Contempt, hath occaſioned moſt of the Schiſms and Diviſions in the Chriſtian Church: This was the great Fault of the *Corinthians*, who by crying up one Teacher, to the decrying of another, fell into ſundry Parties and Factions, which St. *Paul* ſharply rebuked in them, tho' their Zeal ran mightily towards *himſelf*; for finding they had made *him* the Head of a Party, he ſeverely check'd their partiality, and the more they ſought to magnify

magnify *him*, the more he endeavour'd to leſſen *himſelf*: *Who* (ſaith he) *is Paul? and who is Apollo? Who?* (ſaith an eminent Father on thoſe Words) *why, they were ſome of the chief Apoſtles and Miniſters of Chriſt: And yet we find St.* Paul *not only ſtileing himſelf the leaſt of the Apoſtles, but the greateſt of Sinners, to keep Men from having too high thoughts and admiration of him.* And if it were ſtrife and envying to ſet up for *Paul*, or *Apollo*, or *Cephas*; certainly it can be no true Zeal to ſet up for far inferior Perſons.

This is a Matter worthy the conſideration of all ſuch as have Men's *Perſons* in admiration, running after different Teachers, to the great diſturbance of the Church, which is the great miſery and malady of *our* unhappy Age.

And now for the application of this Diſcourſe; tho' many uſeful Leſſons might be infer'd from it, yet I ſhall confine my ſelf to *two*, which very naturally and eaſily flow from it. For,

If it be good to be Zealouſly affected in a *good* thing, then *1ſt*, It muſt be *bad* to be Zealouſly affected in an *ill* thing; and *2dly*, It can be no better to be *lukewarm* and *coldly affected* in a *good* thing: Of both which, that I may not treſpaſs

too

too much upon your Patience, I ſhall ſpeak very briefly. And,

1ſt, We may learn from hence, that 'tis *bad* to be Zealouſly affected in an *ill* thing: 'Tis a double fault, firſt to eſpouſe a bad Cauſe, and then to be warm and zealous in promoting it; he that is out of the way, the faſter he goes, the farther he goes out of it; and to ſet him right, he muſt go it back again, and mend his Pace after; To rectify a bad Zeal, we muſt alter and unravel our former Courſe, and labour to *undo* all that we have done amiſs. True *Zeal* is always *againſt*, and never *for* an *evil* thing; and therefore to be zealous for a *Party*, and hot in promoting *Faction* or *Diviſion*, is to employ it in a very *bad* thing: To favour a *wrong* Cauſe, or diſcountenance a *good* one, are *both* equally abominable; and he that is warm in *either*, is clearly out of the way, and can never *judge righteous Judgment*: to ſpend our Zeal in encouraging of *Schiſm*, and promoting *Diſorder* and *Diſturbance* in the World, is to put one of the *beſt things* to one of the *worſt uſes*, and therefore we find Zeal commonly compar'd to Fire, than which as no Element is more uſeful and reviving, whilſt it remains on the Hearth, and

and keeps within its due Place and Bounds, ſo none is more Pernicious and Deſtructive, when once refuſing confinement, it breaks forth and invades the Houſe-top: For the ſame Reaſon 'tis ſome times compar'd to the natural Heat of the Body, which in its due Temper and Moderation, is the Spring both of Life and Health, and the ſource of all vital Operations; but when it grows into exceſs, and breaks out into burning Fevers, it inflames the Spirits, and *ſets on Fire the whole Courſe of Nature:* Juſt ſo is it with Zeal, which, if duly plac'd and regulated, is the Support and Ornament of the Soul, fills it with a lively and vigorous Heart, and fits it for brave and noble Undertakings; but when 'tis miſplac'd, or runs into exceſs, 'tis no better than Wild-fire, and ſets whole Countries into a combuſtion; which ſhews what great Care is to be taken, that it be guided with Knowledge, and plac'd upon right Objects, ſuch as may be not only *materially*, but in all its Circumſtances found to be a good thing: To this end know, my Brethren, that tho' *Reformation of Manners*, where 'tis ſincerely intended, and rightly manag'd, be a very *good* thing; yet where 'tis only pretended,

to

to put the better Face on Schiſm, and countenance Diviſions, 'tis a very *bad* thing; and a true Zeal for the former may be well employ'd, to Watch and Prevent the deſigns of the latter.

2*dly*, As 'tis *bad* to be zealouſly affected in an *ill* thing, ſo 'tis no leſs ſo, to be *lukewarm* and *coldly affected* in a *good* one: This is that *Laodicean* temper, that is ſo hateful unto God, and ſo ſharply rebuked by him; *I would* (ſaith he) *that thou wert either Hot or Cold*, but ſince thou art neither, but Lukewarm, *I will Spue thee out of my Mouth*, Rev. 3. 15, 16. Indeed there is nothing more nauſeous and loathſome unto God, than this *indifferent* Temper, which being void of all true Love to him, and his ways, keeps Men from being True or Faithful to either: *Love* is a *warm* Paſſion, and where 'tis fix'd on any Object, will not ſuffer us to Speak or Act *coldly* about it; and therefore where Men are Unconcern'd, either for the Sincerity or Solemnity of God's Worſhip, 'tis plain they want that inward Principle, that ſhould move them in his Service, and can alone recommend them to him.

If we look abroad, we may find ſome too *indifferent* about the affairs of Religi-

on;

on; and like *Gallio, Care for none of these things*: Others are ſomewhat warmer, but withal mighty *wavering* and *inconſtant*, halting between two Opinions; being *Conformiſts* one day, and *Nonconformiſts* another; and like ſo many *Proteus*'s in Religion, ſtill *given to change*: This is *to halt between God and Baal*; which the Prophet upbraids as a piece of great Inconſtancy, willing Men to be more plain and ſteddy in their ways: *If the Lord be God follow him, if Baal then follow him*; he that looks two different ways ſeldom ſteers his courſe aright, and to halt between two Opinions, is to be *neither* ſound nor firm in *either*: And therefore to be truly zealous, is to be *ſtedfaſt, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; to hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering*, and to adhere to the well-grounded Principles and Practices of true Religion, without turning from them, either to the right-hand or to the left: To this end let us *Love God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and with all our ſtrength*; knowing, that tho' God loves a *broken*, yet he hates a *divided* Heart; and when our Affections are thus ſetled on him, we ſhall be *Zealouſly affected always in a good thing*. In a word,

It being equally evil, to be zealous in a *bad* Cauſe, and lukewarm in a *good*, let us endeavour to avoid both extreams; and learn ſo to regulate and fix our Zeal, that it may be ſtill plac'd on right Objects, kept within its due bounds, and directed to good ends: So ſhall this Sacred fire improve into a Celeſtial flame, that will be ſtill burning in our Breaſts towards God, and for ever derive upon us the bleſſed Influences of Divine Love: Which God grant for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be all Honour, Might, Majeſty and Dominion, both now and for evermore.

FINIS.

BRITISH MUSEUM 4 MR 79

The SUBSCRIBERS Names.

A.

MR. *John Ackland*, A. B. Fellow-Commoner of *Exeter* College.
The Reverend Mr. *Samuel Adams*, S. T. B. Rector of *Wootton* in *Northamptonshire*.
Mr. *Thomas Alford*, A. B. of *Brazen-nose* Coll.
Mr. *Thomas Allen*, A. M.
The Reverend Mr. *William Armistead*, A.M. Vicar of *Chacomb* near *Banbury*.
Mr. *Arnold* of *University* College.
Mr. *Abbott* of *Oxford*.

B.

Mr. *Banister* of *Oxford*.
Mr. *Richard Barford* of *Exeter* College.
Mr. *Bartlett*, A. B. late Fellow of *Ex.* Coll.
Mr. *Bateman*, A. M. of *University* Coll.
Mr. *Thomas Bayley*, A. B. of *Exeter* College.
The Right Honorable Lord *Sidney Beauclair* of *Trinity* Coll. *Oxon.* Six Copies.
Mr. *George Bent* of *Oriel* College.
The Reverend Mr. *Humphry Betty*, A. M. Rector of *Yardley* in *Northamptonshire*.
Mr. *Jos. Betty*, A. M. Fellow of *Exeter* Coll.
Mr. *Best*, A. M. Fellow of *Baliol* College.
Mr. *Beighton*, A. M. Fellow of *Merton* Coll.
The Reverend Mr. *Bigg*, S.T.B. Warden of *New* College.
Mr. *Jos. Birchinsha*, A.B. Fellow of *Ex.* Coll.
Mr. *William Boughton*, A. B. of *Exeter* Coll.

The

The Reverend Dr. *Brabourn*, Principal of *New-Inn* Hall.
Mr. *Brock* of *Oxford*.
Mr. *Brown* of *Oxford*.
The Reverend Mr. *Brynker* S. T. B. Fellow of *Jesus* College.
Mr. *Burnet* of *Exeter* College.
The Rev. Mr. *Burman*, Vicar of *Newington*.
Mr. *John Burton*, A. M. Fellow of C. C. C.

C.

The Right Reverend Dr. *Clavering*, Lord Biſhop of *Landaff*.
Mr. *Fran. Clark*, A. B. of *Exeter* College.
Mr. *John Clark*, Bookſeller in *London*.
Mr. *Carveth* Fellow-Com. of *Exeter* Coll.
Mr. *Clayton*, Fellow-Commoner of *Pemb.* Coll.
Mr. *Cole* of *Exeter* College.
Mr. *James Coſſeret*, A. B. of *Exeter* College.

D.

The Reverend Mr. *Davys*, A. M. Rector of *Aſhby* in *Northamptonſhire*.
The Reverend Mr. *Deniſon*, S. T. B. Maſter of *Univerſity* College, *Oxon*.
Mr. *Dunning* of *Exeter* College.

E.

Mr. *Eaſtway*, A. M. late Fellow of *Ex.* Coll.
Mr. *Edgcomb* of *Exeter* College.
Mr. *Eſton*.
Mr. *Evans*.

F.

The Reverend Dr. *Felton*, Principal of *Edmund* Hall.
The Reverend *Richard Fiddes*, D. D.
Dr. *Fourneaux* Fellow of *Exeter* College.

Mr.

Mr. *Robert Fowks* of *Chriſt-Church.*
Richard Freeman of *Battesford*, Eſquire.
Mr. *Fredrick* of *Univerſity* College.

G.

The Reverend Dr. *Gardiner*, Warden of *All-Souls* College.
Mr. *Godwin*, A. M. Fellow of *Baliol* College.
Mr. *Henry Goldwyer* Fellow of *Exeter* Coll.
Mr. *Goldwyer* of *Sarum.*
Mr. *Goodridge* A. B. of *Exeter* College.
Mr. *William Greenway*, A. M. Vice-Principal of *Hart*-Hall.
The Reverend Mr. *Gunnis* S. T. B. Fellow of *Jeſus* College *Oxon.*

H.

The Reverend Mr. *Hawkey*, A.M.
Mr. *Hambley*, Fellow-Commoner of *Exeter* College.
Mr. *Harper* of *Exeter* College.
Mr. *Harneſs*, A. B. of *Exeter* College.
The Reverend *John Haviland*, S. T. B. Vicar of S. *Petherwin*, *Cornwall.*
The Reverend Mr. *Hickes*, A. M. Vicar of *Minhennit*, *Cornwall.*
Mr. *Sam. Hayward.*
Nicholas Herle, Eſquire.
The Reverend Mr. *Hind*, A.M.
Mr. *Hiat*, Fellow Commoner of *Pem.* Coll.
The Reverend Dr. *Holland*, Warden of *Merton* College *Oxon.*
Mr. *Horner* of *Oxford.*
The Reverend Dr. *Hunt*, Maſter of *Bal.* Coll.
The Reverend Dr. *Hunt*, Arch-Deacon of *Bath.*
Mr. *Hunt*, A.M. Fellow of *Wadham* College.
Mr. *Hole*, A.B. of *Trinity* College. Mr.

I.

Mr. *Euſeb. Iſham*, A. M. Fellow of *Linc.*
The Reverend Dr. *Jones*, Principal of *Jeſus* College *Oxon.*
Mr. *Jones*, A. M. Fellow of *Jeſus* College.
Mr. *John Jones*, A. M. Fellow of *Bal.* Coll.
Mr. *William Jones*, A. M.

K.

Mr. *James Kendal*, A. M. Fellow of *Exeter* Coll.
Mr. *Kennet* A. B. of *Merton* College.
Mr. *George Kenwrick*, A. M. of *Wadham* Coll.
Mr. *John King*, Fellow of *Kings* Coll. *Camb.*

L.

Dr. *Lane*, M. D. of *Banbury.*
The Reverend Mr. *Thomas Leigh*, S. T. B. Fellow of *C. C. C.*
Mr. *Lee*, A. M. of *C. C. C.*
Mr. *John Leave*, A. M. Fellow of *Wadham* Coll.
Mr. *George Lacey*, A. B. of *Exeter* College.
Mr. *Langly* of *Exeter* College.
The Reverend Mr. *Humphry Lloyd*, S. T. B. Fellow of *Jeſus* College.
The Reverend Dr. *Lupton*, Fellow of *Lincoln* College, and Prebendary of *Durham.*

M.

Francis Man of *Kidlington*, Eſquire.
The Reverend Dr. *Mather*, Vice-Chancellor of the Univerſity of *Oxford.*
The Reverend Mr. *William Mervin*, S. T. B.
The Reverend Mr. *Millewmas*, A. M.
Mr. *Morice* Fellow-Commoner of *C. C. C.*
Mr. *Mohun* Fellow Commoner of *Exeter* Col.

N

The Reverend Dr. *Newton*, Principal of *Hart*-Hall.

Mr.

Mr. *Newton* of *Lincoln* College.
Mr. *Fran. Nicholls*, M. B. Prelect. Anat. to the Univerſity of *Oxford*.

P.

The Reverend Dr. *Panton*, Maſter of *Pembroke* College.
Mr. *John Pain*, A. M. of St. *Mary* Hall.
Mr. *Page*, A. M. Fellow of *Magdalen* Coll.
Sir *Henry John Parker*, Baronet of *New*-College *Oxon*.
Mr. *Parſons*, A. B. of *Exeter* College.
The Reverend Mr. *Pitt*, A. M. Prebendary of *Litchfield*.
Mr. *Henry Pitt*, Fellow of *Exeter* College.
Mr. *Prideaux* of *Exeter* College.
Mr. *Prince*, A. M. Fellow of *New* College.

Q.

Mr. *Queſtion*, A. M. Fellow of *Ex.* College.

R.

Mr. *John Ratcliff*, A. B. Fell. of *Pemb.* Coll.
Mr. *Anthony Riſdon*, of *Baliol* College.
The Reverend Mr. *Rogers*, A. M.

S.

Mr. *Sanford* A. M. Fellow of *Baliol* College.
Mr. *Thomas Seale*, A. M. Fellow of *Ex.* Coll.
Mr. *Seale*, Fellow Commoner of *Pemb.* Coll.
The Reverend Mr. *Somarſeal*, A. M.
The Reverend Mr. *Secker*, A. M. Rector of *Houghton le Sping*, *Durham*.
Mr. *Snell* of *Exeter* College.
Mr. *Snell*, A. M. of *Trinity* College.
The Reverend Mr. *Thomas Snell*, A. M. Vicar of *Bampton*.
Mr. *Scot*, Fellow of *Exeter* College.

Mr.

Mr. *Symonds*, A.M. Fellow of *Ex.* Col.

T.

Mr. *Tapin* of *Exeter* College.
The Reverend *Eubule Thellwell*, S. T. B. Fellow of *Jesus* College.
Sir *Haswell Tent*, Baronet, of *New* College. Six Copies.
Mr. *Tent*, Fellow of *New* College, Six Copies.
Dr. *John Thorpe* of *Rochester*.
The Reverend Dr. *Tovey*, L.L. D. Fellow of *Merton* College.
Mr. *Trelawney* A. B. of *Christ-Church*.
Mr. *Tottenham*, A. M. Fellow of *Lincoln* College.
Mr. *Terry* of *Baliol* College.

V.

The Reverend Mr. *William Veysey*, S. T. B. Fellow of *Lincoln* College.
Mr. *Vinicombe* of *Exeter* College.
Mr. *Upton*, A.M. Fellow of *Wadham* College.

W.

Mr. *Wardle* of *Oriel* College.
Mr. *Webb*, A. B. of *Exeter* College.
Mr. *Wells* A. B. of *Edmund* Hall.
Mr. *Wesley*, A. B. of *Christ-Church*.
Mr. *Wilcocks*, Fellow of *Exeter* College.
The Reverend Mr. *John Wilcocks*, A. M. Rector of *Exborn*, *Devon*.
Mr. *Williams* of *Exeter*-College.
Mr. *Wilson*, A. M. Fellow of *Baliol* College.
Mr. *Wright*, Gentleman Commoner of St. *Mary*-Hall.
Mr. *Wright* of *Oxford*.

Y.

Mr. *Yong* of *Exeter* College.

BRITISH MUSEUM 4 MR 79